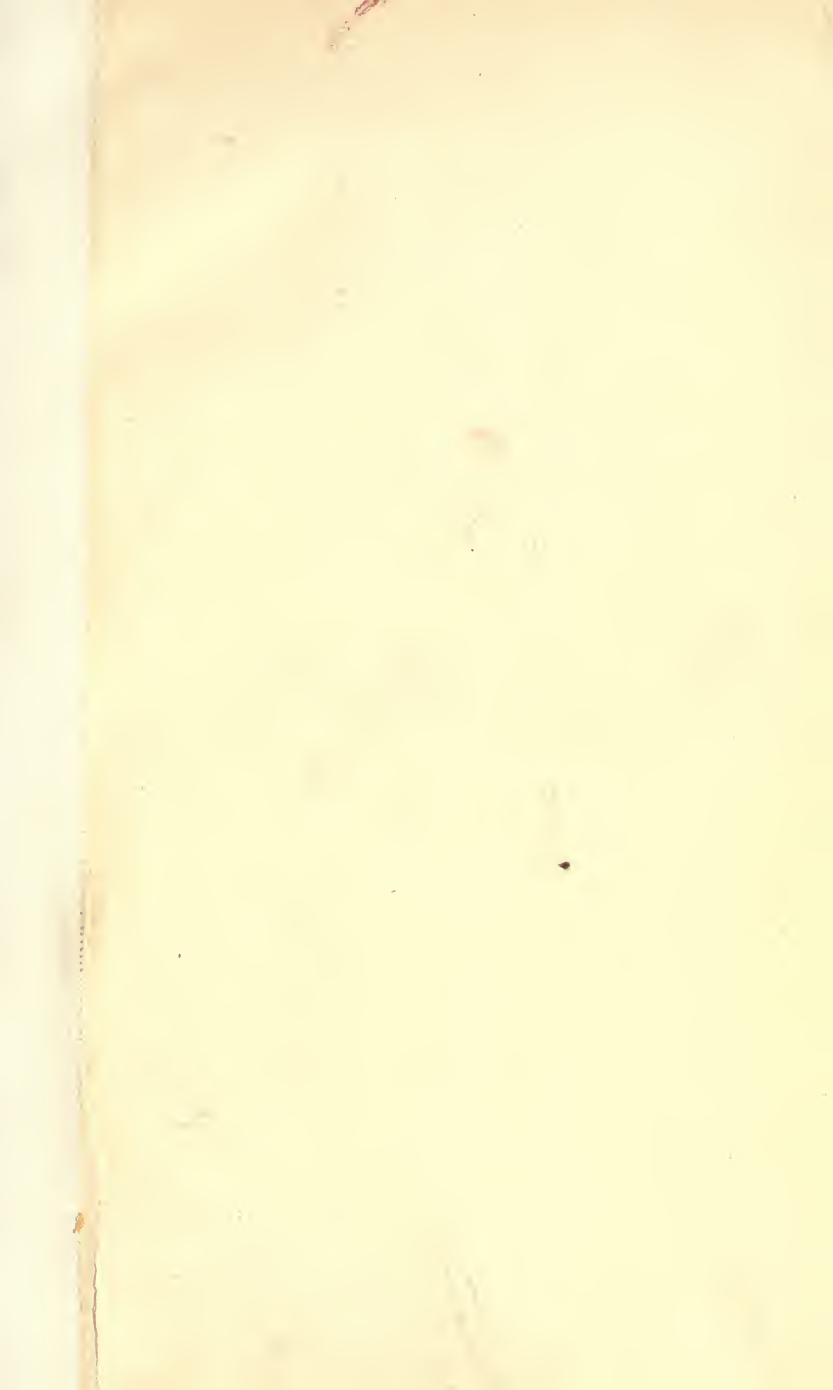




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ASPECTS OF PESSIMISM

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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ASPECTS OF PESSIMISM

BY

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TO THE MEMORY OF

JAMES M'MILLAN,

LATE CLARK FELLOW OF GLASGOW UNIVERSITY

“As man seeks to be a Redeemer, he ceases to ask why the world needs Redemption.”

—JULIA WEDGWOOD.

“When Herakles was taken up to the consistory of the gods, he approached Hêrê first of all, and saluted her.

“‘How,’ said Zeus, ‘do you first seek your worst enemy to do her courtesy?’

“‘Yea,’ said Herakles, ‘her malice it was made me do such deeds as have lifted me to Heaven.’”

—*From the German.*

“Beyond the path of the outmost sun through utter darkness hurled—

Further than ever comet flared or vagrant star-dust swirled—

Live such as fought and sailed and ruled and loved and made our world.

They take their mirth in the joy of earth—they dare not grieve for her
pain—

They know of toil and the end of toil, they know God’s law is plain,

So they whistle the Devil to make them sport who know that Sin is
vain.”

—RUDYARD KIPLING.

P R E F A C E.

THESE six essays naturally fall into two groups. Although all are determined by the same views, the first four are probably of more interest to the general reader than the two last.

Several years ago, I contemplated a more exhaustive work on Pessimism. But preoccupation in teaching, and other duties, as well as the knowledge that several writers, including more especially one of my own colleagues, were engaged on the subject, have deterred me from carrying out this plan. I therefore hope that the two more strictly technical essays will be regarded as suggestive rather than as final. They represent preparatory inquiries, not concluding deliverances. The other papers discuss subjects which are not usually approached from a similar standpoint.

Somewhat less than one-half of what is here printed has appeared before in various periodicals. Small por-

tions of the first and second essays, and nearly the whole of the third, were contributed to the 'Scots Magazine'; the greater part of the fourth to the 'Transactions of the English Goethe Society'; portions of the fifth to the 'Scottish Review'; and a fourth part of the sixth to the 'Contemporary Review.' To the editors of these publications my best thanks are due for their courteous permission to use this material. It has been subjected to revision throughout, and has been set more or less in fresh connections.

I am much indebted also to Professors Robertson and Bradley of Glasgow, and to Professor Edward Caird, now Master of Balliol College, Oxford, for valuable suggestions regarding certain portions of the manuscript which they were so good as to read; and to Professor Veitch of Glasgow for constant encouragement, and many other kindnesses too numerous to mention: thanks to Mr George G. Duncan, M.A., President of the Glasgow University Theological Society, who has read the proofs, I have been enabled to render some passages clearer than they would otherwise have been. None are to be regarded as in any respect responsible for the opinions on which I may have ventured.

R. M. W.

QUEEN MARGARET COLLEGE,
GLASGOW, *May* 1894.

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JEWISH PESSIMISM.

I. Introductory.

LIKE so many general terms, which imply mainly an abstraction and ideal unification of qualities, Pessimism is not interpreted precisely in the same way by every one. Dissatisfaction with life, arising from the supposed emptiness of existence, hopelessness in the present and despair of the future, these and similar sentiments, often with widest variations, usually serve to constitute its chief implications. Taken somewhat more definitely, viewed rather as a reasonable conclusion from ascertained facts than as a vague opinion, the word signifies that philosophical scheme which explains the universe by "proving" its badness; or, more strictly still, the systematised view of human nature which ends in the elimination of moral value,—goods there may be, good on the whole there emphatically is not.

But, no matter what its explicit doctrine or implicit dogma, pessimism can only be connected with Jewish morals and religion under some very distinct restrictions. Of the pessimism of evil, with its speculative

questions respecting origin and end, the Jews knew nothing. Happily for them, and for mankind, spiritual leanings effectually prevented the emergence of such problems. Of vice, with its inversion of the human ideal, they, like other men, necessarily learned much in the course of experience. And, as a closely welded community inheriting patriarchal conceptions, they were in the habit of treating it to some extent as crime, or violation of the regulations requisite to the preservation of society. Specific law happened to be with them one indispensable condition of order in personal character. But this presupposed that aspect of the badness of life by close acquaintance with which they were chiefly distinguished. Jewish pessimism was always intimately associated with conviction of sin, an aspect of moral consciousness evinced more continuously and deeply by the Hebrews than by any other people. Now, sin bears a practical rather than a speculative interpretation. It presupposes a personal creator and a personal creature, —presuppositions amplified in Judaism by the direct relation of the Holy One to the special race. The difficulty of life, accordingly, could hardly prove absolute or productive of utter despair. For, though events may run counter to ideals, it can hardly be said that with God the opposition can become irremediable. The bad, for instance, whatever its nature, cannot be entirely assigned to external things. The Greek reference of evil to defects "in the matter" could not but be either no reason or unreason to the Jew. Man having taken his place as a co-operator with God, the question of goodness and badness could not be extended to an outer sphere beyond these personal terms in the great equation of life. Thus the Jewish view was so far essen-

tially hopeful that it left no room for a surd at the outset. Even the Satan of *Job* has slight independent being: he proposes to work with divine permission, and, having started the machinery of trial, he disappears. Unlike Mephistopheles, he comes to try the fibre of Job's character, not to stimulate his intellect. Despite his advent, the Deity and the man face the issue together, and attain an understanding of a kind without vital help from him. God's reality, God's wisdom, condition all the circumstances. In other words, the limits within which the question is set imply that it can be answered. Whether the reply is sufficient or final we need not immediately inquire. The central point is that, as faith accompanies the moral schism, hope cannot fail to attend also. By its very constitution Judaism was eudæmonistic, not in a "low utilitarian," but in the highest, sense. According to its survey man is here, difficulties abound, and the simple practical matter is, how can he, taking them at their worst, make the best of them. The riddle was kept out of the intellectual and speculative field, and rendered almost entirely a disciplinary experience, by religious considerations. All the elements pertaining to the problem were involved. Both universal and individual were present. On the other hand, each was conceived as of a specifically pre-determined nature, and so the sweep of the conclusion came to be limited.

Critics of Judaism, especially when bound by the presuppositions incident to the speculative construction of Christianity, have not invariably been careful to keep these two issues separate. Indeed, they are often prone to take account of nothing but the limitation,—a convenient course, maybe, yet none the less unfair,

perhaps even ungenerous. The inner logic of its creed, as the contention runs, condemned Judaism to end in pessimism. Had this not happened, Christianity would not have been required "to transcend and include" its predecessor. This view is unjust, because it credits all modern speculative advance to one side, and debits all ancient defect in philosophic criticism to the other. Further, it involves certain misconceptions of Judaism as a religious phenomenon. Forgetting the wide variations within the religion itself, for example, writers are to be found who maintain that the impervious selfhood of Yahveh is its single distinguishing characteristic. But the crucial statement in Deuteronomy is only one aspect of the whole truth. "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord [Yahveh] he is God in the heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else."¹ So far as we are now aware, Israel's faith, as Renan rightly insists, always differed from that of related tribes, and it passed, as Kuenen and others have shown, into a highly developed type of monotheism. Yet, it must never be forgotten that there was a primitive "monolatry," and that "ethical monotheism" did not end Jewish religious progress. This monotheism itself, moreover, is "religious," not "metaphysical."² The faith of Israel, in other words, can be taken as a type of semi-pessimistic religion only if a series of tacit assumptions be admitted without dispute. These may be stated as follows: Yahveh is alleged to be transcendent—set apart from man and unapproachable. He is the one magnificent personality, and by comparison, the human, like the natural, is dwarfed into utter insignificance. This separation of

¹ Chap. iv. 39.² *Alttestament. Theologie*, Schultz, pp. 166 sq.

the divine from the earthly accounts for the gloomy features of Judaism, and takes shape in a hopeless acquiescence, such as is exemplified in *Ecclesiastes*. Its burden is, "Know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."¹ Once more, it is held that "the Jew is God's servant, who labours to deserve eternal life by his conformity to the law." Or, as Wellhausen has it, "the sum of the means became the end; through the *Torah* God was forgotten." Legalism erected a barrier between Yahveh and his people which never could be overpassed, and men either turned to pharisaism or were thrown back on a self-centred mysticism. If these assumptions and their several implications be true, then Judaism may fairly be cited as the eminent example of a religion destined for pessimism.

But, even taking the religion of the Jews only in its middle and later periods,—only in its "ethical monotheism," and in its "legalism and formalism which entangle all life in a network of meaningless prescriptions,"—and putting the matter very summarily, it may be affirmed, *first*, that prophetic ideals are by no means so exclusively subjective as has been alleged. The Yahvehistic notion of righteousness, as set forth by Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, has little in it of that "change of heart" which subjectivism demands. Not the personal relation of the believer to his God, but the sin of a whole nationality, receives attention. Social defects, effete institutions, and the like objective considerations, partly hold the field. Even a century later, when the ethical monotheism was at its height, the same continues true in the main. At a *future* time, the contention of the prophets seems to be,

¹ Chap. xi. 9.

the personal element in religion will come to predominate. "In *those* days every one shall die for his own iniquity."¹ The prophets, to do them justice, return from self to the world. Yahveh is elevated beyond the reach of other deities—not beyond man—because he created the world, and because he is the immanent originator of all the changes in Jewish history. Jeremiah's long self-communing disappears in Ezekiel and the second Isaiah, and Yahveh is conceived as a saving power who, in the course of time, will lead captivity captive. And although a diffused or world-wide force of this kind, he is represented as very near to his people, dwelling in the temple, or hovering, like a luminous cloud, over Jerusalem.

Secondly, the doctrine that Yahveh was transcendent, and therefore distant from his worshippers, implies a metaphysical interpretation of the prophetic teaching which, in the absence of any systematised account of the nature of deity, seems unwarrantable. The transcendency is traceable rather to the modern and theological reading of a naïve religious conception. God dwelt specially in the temple among his people, and in heaven, which was viewed not simply as a place but as a state or condition. *Ecclesiastes* excepted, there is small warrant for imagining that heaven was cut off from earth. Further, Yahveh is immanent in the universe, not only because he is the hourly superintendent of Jewish destiny, but because "he watches over and controls the sustenance and life of all plants and animals, and directs immediately all natural phenomena."² The prophets had no formulated doctrine of a God separ-

¹ Jeremiah xxxi. 29, 30.

² Judaism and Christianity, C. H. Toy, p. 80.

ated from nature, and the dualism now so often emphasised is a factor which metaphysic reflects into their religious simplicity. It finds little or no support in their books, and, even admitting the evidence of *Ecclesiastes*, it must be said that the genius of Koheleth is too completely non-Jewish to bear the exclusive burden of so large a deduction. In fact, the particularism, in which he too partakes, contradicts the doctrine of transcendence. The Jews did not trouble about metaphysical constructions, but were amply satisfied that Yahveh had specially charged himself with their care. There was no need to elaborate a theory of his relation to them or to the world, the truth of his nearness had been so plainly manifested. The God who loves them that live in the fear—that is, the conscious acknowledgment—of his law, is more prominent than the God who slays idolators or chastises the unrighteous in Israel.

Thirdly, taking the post-exilic religion, not in one alone of its many and most perplexing aspects, but as a whole, it may be affirmed that the Jews adopted the law as a special privilege which endued them with an ideal of the good life directly revealed by Yahveh. This was the mediator between God and man. “Beloved are Israel,” as rabbinical literature has it, “for unto them was given the law.” It was only with the law that Yahvehism became a people’s religion; and any one who reflects upon the nature of the Jew’s relation to the *Torah* will readily understand why, to this very hour, he remains personally near to deity, and has for weary centuries been willing to endure any martyrdom rather than part with God’s peculiar gift, which, as a theory would have it, did nothing but

bring the twin curses of cant and hypocrisy, or of despair and spiritual destitution.

This failure to distinguish between the problem of sin and misery, and the limits within which a solution was sought, has, further, led to an identification of so-called Judaizing ideas with gloominess, both in the popular mind and in the estimation of scholars. To put it briefly, the "man in the street" has been far too ready to accept Puritanism as a Hebraic type. The traditional Scottish Sabbath, for instance, is often stigmatised as Jewish, and, assuredly, were languid heaviness a trait of all Judaistic observances, no defence of the description would be necessary. But we must bear in mind that the now rapidly passing northern observance is to its Jewish counterpart as a corpse to a living body. Puritanism may be Hebraic, but on one condition only—if the religion of the Jews be possessed of no imaginative admixture. The "plain man" has not sufficiently perceived that the genius creative of the glories of Yahveh hardly bears comparison, far less identification, with the talent descriptive of hell's horrors. Where Puritanism was gloomy, Judaism was joyous; where the Saxon was cold and austere, the Semite was sentimental and broad; where the one was calm and analytic, the other was ecstatic and imaginative. Fanaticism can only be confounded with aspiration when both are misconceived, and the popular notion of Judaism has too often led itself astray thus. On the other side also, the scholar's natural, we had almost said traditional, antithesis between Greek and Jew has been of similar effect. A monopoly of beauty, as all know, has come to be associated with the former, the unlovely being left, *per contra*, to the latter. Doubtless the sublimity of Yahveh did turn his people from

fullest appreciation of nature, yet it brought compensations. And in this connection a scholar may fitly be cited to make some reparation for the many injustices done by his fellows. "In the absence of Hope and of an ideal of progress, we strike upon one great difference between the classical Greeks and Hebrews. Not that the history of the Hebrews was one of progressive expansion and orderly development. It was so in a far less degree than that of the Hellenes, being in truth a long record of ever-recurring rebellions and late repentances. The nation was of all others the most full of inner contradictions; the higher and the lower self were never reconciled. Yet in the darkest hour of adversity the Prophets did not despair of Israel. When Jerusalem was desolate, when the people was in captivity, and national existence had been crushed, the voice of prophecy speaks out the more confidently. It points back to the divine guidance that had watched over the race, and tells of the mighty destiny that was in store for Israel."¹ Jewish theism, unique in theory and invincible in practice, set a limit to Jewish despair. Pessimism can be fitly traced in Jewish literature and life only when all the wealth of meaning that this limitation implies is carefully conserved. Yahveh and progress by Yahveh's hand, in short, dictated a hereditary optimism to the Jews, though an optimism in which pessimistic elements were not without place. Their happiness was no mere vapid content. The sublimity of the imaginative conception out of which it grew imparted strong tonicity. The whole faith, like

"Our poesy, is as a gum, which oozes
From whence 'tis nourished."

¹ Some Aspects of the Greek Genius. S. H. Butcher, pp. 157, 158. (First edition.)

II. The Jewish Doctrine of Retribution.

Jewish pessimism naturally stands in close connection with the semi-religious, semi-ethical doctrine of rewards and punishments peculiar to the chosen people. Though it passed through many phases, the central conception of Hebrew ethics may be said to have related largely to the question of sin and reparation, of dereliction and retribution. At an early period, solidarity of the community and restitution by sacrifice were the outstanding features. Later, when "wisdom," with its accompanying "pessimism," stalked abroad, repentance and personal responsibility emerged. Equity as between God and man began to pale under the influence of prophetic ideals, and Yahveh's holiness came to be accompanied by the higher standard of justice. By the time of Job and Koheleth, the practical bearing of the retribution theory upon the lives of individuals pressed hard for explanation. The restraints of reverence, which had done duty for several centuries, were not indeed dissolved, but the reflective found it more and more difficult to unify them with the conditions seemingly implied by the overruling providence of an absolute rightness. While the former predominated, under certain ascertained historical circumstances, the assurance that reward followed righteousness and punishment misconduct rested nearly unassailed. Happiness, in short, constituted a co-principle with reverence, because both happened to consort. But when the idea of justice acquired prominence, its essential incompatibility with simple eudæmonism came home, not to Israel, but to some Israelites. A higher happiness was presented for consideration, and the movement towards

this new ethical centre was not accomplished without much misgiving and many heart-searchings. Single acts and given particular conditions slowly came to demand attention, and, as later literature shows, at last elbowed other aspects aside. In this stage of transition close study of the actual occurrences furnished the basis necessary for a fresh induction. The "low utilitarianism," the "worldly wisdom," and so forth, as stigmatising criticism has them, were really instances of further readings in the moral presuppositions. The latter—Yahveh, his fostering care and his holiness—had long been well understood; the former—the disappointments and pains incident to individual lives—were unfamiliar, at least when taken, as they had now come to be, for a series of oppositions to the providential scheme revealed in past ages. The humbler elements—the less truly moral, if you please—predominate, not because selfishness and the hope for material remuneration of virtue form the ethical standard, but because moral principles already instilled, and regarded as self-rewarding, cannot yet be traced definitely operating in life when regarded from an entirely strange standpoint. No doubt, what may without offence be termed the circumspection of Jewish morality might very well result in that species of selfishness known as convention. It has, however, one compensating feature,—it is little likely to end in the vapouring which is incapable of permanently influencing any line of conduct whatsoever. Eudæmonism is present yet absent; moral idealism is operative yet inoperative. The one forms the natural accompaniment of the older theory of goodness and happiness, destined to pass away; the other supplies the presupposition of the theory which has not yet ad-

justed itself to a more extended outlook. Both, again, are implied in the problem that was to come up for solution,—how “to execute *God’s will* towards everything outside of me by everything that is *given* me.” For the Jewish genius, God’s will always remained ultimately the same, but the conception of man’s endowment altered considerably. To take the last. The idea of compensation, either in the positive form of reward or in the negative shape of retribution, determined everything that befell humanity; and humanity was known, if not exclusively, then most intimately, as the chosen people. In any case, they received judgment here below as others did not. For, being members of a special race, they bore a conjoint responsibility peculiar to themselves, and therefore merited exceptional treatment at the hands of deity. But this patriarchal solidarity, significant of a comparatively early stage in civilisation, could not endure. Contact with other nations, often to their own detriment, enlarged the Jews’ notion of humanity, and altered old beliefs concerning God’s dealings—that is, regarding what man received. Hence arose a period of moral criticism, during which pessimism played its part, a valuable part be it said, and helped to evolve larger ideals, not simply of man’s endowment, but also of his relation to the external world. Very specially, too, the conceptions of God, and of God’s will, came to be widened. Much hesitation, some quibbling, and a little ill-temper marked this period. It is not, however, to be condemned, but studied. For, in its main results, it refortified Jewish optimism, and thus refreshed moral aspiration in other races. The ideal of a God bound to reward was, indeed, never overpassed; but the peculiar

needs which imperatively called for that higher ideal—a God able to save—were beginning to concentrate themselves.

Accordingly, although the Jews, in so far as reliable records attest, always based ethical judgments on theistic presuppositions, the implied conception of deity underwent variation. Not only this, different writers adopted various attitudes towards it, and these were to a large extent influenced by a historical progress in breadth of moral outlook. Thus, the Wisdom Literature, especially in its most pronouncedly pessimistic books, occupied a distinctive position. Its age, so far as this can be relatively ascertained, and its contents, certainly, are indicative of a period of movement, if not of transition. Questions of perennial interest are being faced within the limits of a highly specialised theism, and under definite historico-moral antecedents.

Unfortunately for a complete estimate of the development of prophetic and post-prophetic Judaism, we know little precisely of the three Wisdom books except from internal evidence.¹ For our present purpose, however, internal evidence may largely suffice, more especially as *Proverbs*, the most crucial work for the problems of religious history, can be dismissed with a brief reference. Internally, then, the Wisdom Literature is characterised by an intellectual and moral universality special to itself. Less exclusively Jewish than the remainder of the Old Testament, it deals with difficulties which in kind, if not in degree, might occur to all men, to any man. On the whole, the wisdom in the light

¹ The most widely accepted conclusions would incline one to regard *Proverbs* as probably, *Job* with high probability, and *Ecclesiastes* as certainly, post-exilic.

of which life may be best conducted is not viewed as an exclusive possession of one race; while the great mysteries of existence, such as the moral government of the universe and man's place in its economy, might be canvassed by any one. Unconsciously, the middle wall of partition has been in process of destruction, and the God of Israel has been tending to become the God of the whole earth. Further, the gaze of these writers is on the things of time, it is no longer rapt with the eternal. God's hand is, no doubt, traced, but not within the spiritual or religious sphere solely. The operations of nature, the institutions built up in the progress of history, all bear witness, not simply to the Holy One, but to something like the immanent principle of recent speculation. Yet it must be remarked that nothing like speculation in the modern degree arrests attention. With the exception of one or two far-off metaphysical analogies, no reasoned treatment of first principles can be discovered. Method—save indeed the artistic method of *Job*—is conspicuous by its absence. The clamant questions are moral, and moral not as regards a theory of the universe, but with reference to the present necessities of perplexed men. Even in *Proverbs* reflectiveness has already taken to itself a wonderful amount of freedom. Theistic convictions apart, there is little reference to the immediate environment. The pursuit of wisdom has dwarfed the importance of national hopes and fears, has obscured racial peculiarities, has eliminated particularist intolerance. Nevertheless, as yet there is no deep-seated difficulty. Temporal rewards and punishments meted to virtues and delinquencies still furnish a sufficient working theory of morals. The prosperous have a title to

be regarded as good, the unsuccessful are presumably evil-doers. Still, although fearing the Lord means departing from evil, we already hear of chastening which is not to be despised;¹ of oppressors who might be envied;² of wicked men who have wherewithal to eat and drink;³ and of many who, though departing from wisdom, possess the outward comforts of life.⁴ Why such should so prosper the writer never asks. This, and similar inquiries, were reserved for Job and Koheleth.

The Wisdom Literature, then, does not present a series of isolated pictures, but is rather typical of distinct ethical doubts which had a history, and finally emerged at a turning-point in the spiritual career of a strongly religious and highly moralised community. The doctrine common to the prophets, to the Hebrew annalists, to the Levitical cursings and blessings, and to some of the Psalms, has its root in the collectivism of the Israelitish idea. The economy of the universe happens to have been so regulated that loyalty to God will be followed by reward, and disaffection, or sin, by prompt retribution. This elementary conception is so far applicable that the misfortunes of members of the group can be traced to delinquencies of the entire community, and *vice versa*. For a time, at least, it burks the inevitable contrast between a universe ruled by One all-wise, all-good, and the terrible sufferings endured by many of its inhabitants. But the moment conviction of individual responsibility formulates itself, the contradiction strikes home with the increased force of contrast. The "servant of the Lord"—a person, not a people—

¹ Chap. iii. 11, 12.

² Chap. iii. 31.

³ Chap. iv. 14 *sq.*

⁴ Chaps. v.; ix.

experiences with but deeper anguish the imputation of unrighteousness when superadded to bodily torment, to commercial disaster, or to social ruin. Why, he exclaims, in a voice that will not, and cannot, be silenced, should these things be? The antinomy is not only nearer, but profounder, than before. For a people can never justify, like a person, the absolute conviction of righteous living. It was always possible for the group, when its doctrines found practical disproof, to dwell on secret sins, or to regard such instances as exceptional, or at least to discount them by pointing to other and happier examples. Not so with the individual. Standing by himself, he, and he only, must bear the burden of his own transgressions, or enjoy the rewards of his righteousness. The elasticity of the ancient rule has disappeared, leaving only a general conception which, by its very rigidity, but heightens the problem of perplexing events. Ezekiel was the first to reveal this. For, no matter what individualising doctrines may be ultimately attributed to his forerunners, he alone boldly reduces the whole question to one of the single life. Death is the desert of sin, not a solatium exacted by deity for the destruction of his private property. God is just in thus decreeing. Why, then, should all his fiats not bear, in man's sight, marks of equal justice? The notion that virtue is its own reward,—because in achieving it man must render his life concentric to a new ideal,—could not be fully grasped as yet. Accordingly, the writers of *Job* and *Ecclesiastes* were forced to contend with a timeless problem under somewhat unfavourable circumstances. Weighted by the ancient doctrine of a righteous God, a God dealing justly throughout the course of history, and still holding by

the theory of temporal rewards and punishments, they felt the full force of the mysterious discrepancy between aspiration and realisation, and had aid from none of those palliative insights which recent speculation in some directions affords. The very magnitude with which the proposition thus presented itself deepened their pessimism, yet vindicated their theism. And, within its own limits, the question proposed possessed distinct universality. In all climes, wherever there was civilisation worthy of the name, it ever and anon recurred. The practical warring between good and evil, especially as its consequences affect man's life, furnishes a never-failing theme. Nearly every great poet hymns it in some sort, and the most profound thinkers grapple with it to wrest its secret. The simple, but elemental, conception of sin never received completer illustration than in Job, and his treatment has been taken up into our more complex theorising of evil. Hamlet, realising the fuller extent of the problem, totters under it; Faust, after marvellous viscissitudes, catches a glimpse of the direction in which salvation lies; Schopenhauer and Hartmann profess to obtain relief by inverting Jewish theism, and solace themselves with the brilliant thought of returning to the bosom of an impersonal devil. Genius calls to genius from age to age, and all, with more or less success, urge attack upon the perennial difficulty poetically rendered in Job's career, and handed on as an enigma by the Preacher.

III. Job and Koheleth.

The freedom of Jewish humanism, already partly attained in *Proverbs*, notwithstanding the strong semi-prophetic admixture in the book, springs forth again in *Job* matured. The writer of this exquisite work was not slow to deny the moral dogmas of his forefathers. The time had arrived when men were so differentiated from one another that success and failure could not be taken as consequences of Yahveh's just dealings. Rather, the question had come to be, could his justice be reconciled with these freaks of fortune. Wealth and honour could no longer be regarded as significant of holiness, nor disease and poverty of sin. The old stays now go by the board at once, and imperatively something must be done to replace them. Conceptions of discipline, of education, of purification do not afford much consolation, and the writer seems determined that Job shall answer his own problem in his own way. On this occasion the difficulty is such that the main question comes to be fairly and squarely faced. God is good, yet evil is real; this is the antithesis. Moved by the lower alternative, Job blasphemes himself into accepting the former side, which at length, he believes, though he knows not how, will justify all. Here despair, because a kind of divine discontent, becomes prophetic of new ideals.

Job's unorthodoxy, however, was not presented in its nakedness, but in a poetical setting wrought with high artistic skill. Moral theories are not made to conflict with one another, but the opinions of individuals clash together and help to work up and maintain a dramatic situation. The subjective issue is transformed into

objective debate for the purposes of art. The poem is consequently neither a pure epic nor a pure drama, but an idealised representation of a certain series of moral and religious concepts. Hence, indeed, its artistic limitations. The appearance of Yahveh, for example, is by no means consonant with the amount of information he imparts, and so modern expectation is disappointed. The dualism between God and his world had at the moment been forced too far to admit even of poetic healing, and the poet fell back on the old watchwords of the righteous. This has undoubtedly obscured Job's problem for some minds. * The book can hardly be called a plea for immortality, or an analysis of the nature of wisdom, or an ethnic allegory, even though the medium employed countenances such interpretations. Something less limited, something nearer the great heart of humanity, informs its majestic sweep. Job may have been a man, but, like the central characters of timeless poetry, he is also a similitude. Through him, who is not of the blood of Israel, art "tells a truth obliquely." In his experience, as put before the reader, proof is led that the contemporary theory of the relation between merit and reward lacks basis in fact. The good man *is* tried; the bad man *may* prosper. Job himself evidenced the one; in his thoughts he can point to instances of the other. The home-thrusting force of his trials diverts attention from the doctrines which they falsify, and concentrates interest upon the constructive effort to rise superior to the conclusions of the day. The moral diremption, that is, cannot be overcome by traditional means, and the struggle to set these aside arises out of the acuteness of an agony which they only intensify. They serve merely as the

point of departure, and do not exhaust the immanent question.

Why should God, the one just and holy Being, shower good upon the impious, and ill upon the righteous? Why, in short, should there be pain, misery, and disaster in human life, seeing that man is made in God's image? This is Job's question. And the writer, showing a true intuition, however imperfect his interpretation of it, intimates that, except in the light of deity, the problem is insoluble. The implications of divinity were not then known as we now perceive them. The possibilities of an ideal life, its dependence upon the infinite, and the wealth of meaning to-day covered by the term "good," had not been revealed to him. So, despite the confident appeal to the Lord, resignation is the only lesson inculcated. Man cannot see "the perfect whole," but must rely upon God's assurance that such is presupposed by the "broken arcs." The very humility of this quasi-solution, the absence of high teleology, characteristic of a writer like the second Isaiah, serve but to deepen the gloom that for a time surrounded Job. Despite the significant circumstance that Satan never appears as an independent power, but solicits divine permission, the calamities of the hero are so realistically conceived, and so forcibly recited by him, that evils take on a body of their own, which the *dénouement* scarcely explains away. There can be little dispute, nevertheless, that, just as the problem of the book is wider than its author saw, so too his representation of Job's victorious hopefulness is an earnest of a higher solution than that which proposes to assuage infinite grief with finite joys. Yet the answer

is so far attained, because Job's steadfast belief is itself a great gain. He plumbs blackest depths, and returns unscathed in soul. So his pessimism must be regarded as no more than the reverse of his yearning.

Job, accordingly, is a record of the majestic struggles consequent upon apparent injustice. The sufferer, as he loses hold upon his belief in God, becomes pessimistic. After his second trial he curses the hour of his birth, and in reply to Eliphaz, maintains that his "days are spent without hope." Weakened faith finds its place partly taken by that conception with which pessimists in all ages have familiarised us. The earthly career is but a cycle. As the past has been, so will the future continue to become. Everything arrives, and in turn departs, yet no progress is traceable. Life is like a treadmill, a mere painful and necessary movement, good for nothing, because productive of nothing. "If a man die, shall he live again? . . . Thou prevailest against him, and he passeth; . . . his sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not."¹ To get away from the present state is, therefore, salvation. In death unconsciousness effectively calms all storms, and ends every grief. So long as God's presence is obscured, the writer rails upon life, vents his indignation in damning existence, or, as if tired of vituperation, finds comfort in the reflection that man's days, though evil, are very few. He nears a more adequate answer when he attempts to find what there can be in God's very nature to account for his misfortunes.² In this he fails, but he does not fall back so completely into his defiant mood. Despair ensues. God is not now forgotten, but his unfathomableness casts deepest shadow over the

¹ Chap. xiv. 14-21.

² Chap. x.

poet's thought. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. . . . And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?"¹ Despite the almost prophetic enunciation of divine vindication in the future, Job wavers again and again. Present trouble threatens to extinguish his faith in the moral order of the universe, till at last, driven to doubt once more by his self-righteous friends, he draws his famous picture of the disproportion between merit and reward in this world.² Nay, further, he deems himself bereft of God's manifestation in relation to his own case. "Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! . . . Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him."³ And the same holds true of the larger sphere beyond. The wicked work all manner of hurt and violence, "yet God imputeth it not for folly."⁴ Nowhere, however, does the first fearful outburst find parallel. Having vented his distemper, as it were, Job attempts to discover the cause for his punishment. He is not ready to soothe himself with a return to his former strong faith. He rather desires to seek a reasonable way out of the moral disorder that is working so disastrously for him. Must it be inferred, he inquires, as my friends urge, that the afflicted are necessarily bad, and the prosperous upright? The affirmative answer alone would have tallied with his early notion of deity. But he perceives its impossibility. Having passed through the fire of a pessimistic mood when God's face was obscured, he never returns to his once belief.

¹ Chap. xiv. 1-3.³ Chap. xxiii. 3-8.² Chap. xxi.⁴ Chap. xxiv. 12.

He would like to think that the absolute justice, inseparable from Yahveh's nature, is also organic to social relations on earth. But his own case, to mention no other, precludes any such conclusion. His moral and religious fibre is thus put to the test, and strained nigh the breaking-point. When the pull is heaviest the pessimism predominates; when the insolubility of life's problem dawns upon him, chastened resignation ensues. And this last, changing no doubt from more sombre to brighter hue, gives character to his final attitude. "Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not."¹ In the poet's mind God himself stands forth as the sole witness to his own supremacy. Consequently, the pessimism of Job is to be viewed as transient. It has the distinctive mark of all pessimism. For, while it lasts, it attempts an estimate of the nature of morality by reference to individual fortune only. It tends to disregard principles controlling life, and therefore to make light of progress. So long as Job is confronted by his friends, who urge that his own wickedness has occasioned his misfortunes, he remains bitter and hopeless. He flings himself, as it were, against the entire order of the world. As a Jew, the writer is inclined to believe that justice inheres in God's nature, and that, so far, his censors must be right. But he *knows* that they are wrong. Hence his rage. From this dilemma he never completely escapes. He does not see how the deity can be revealing himself in a sphere where contradictions abound. God, *in propria personâ*, empha-

¹ Chap. xlii. 3.

sises Job's difficulty for him. Thus constrained, he finds himself able to maintain, as against Bildad and the others, that sin and suffering or righteousness and prosperity do not operate as causes and effects. Yet, notwithstanding, he acquiesces in Yahveh's absolute justice. The two views never are brought to a point of unity, because Job could not comprehend how a holy God, coming into continual contact with a sinful world, was able to preserve his purity untarnished. With him difficulty induced moral scepticism. But this was only a phase which a reaffirmation of faith in God's omnipotence effectively dispelled. The personal standard is found to be of no service when applied to the universe as a whole, and the expulsion of deity affords no relief to the perplexed soul. Assertion of self brings Job very near spiritual death. Nevertheless, even if his understanding were too weak to solve the moral problem, his good will, his persistence in righteousness, constituted a practical reply to his intellectual, no less than to his moral, doubts. So pessimism, as attested by experience, received consecration. Here, as it ever must, it takes its place as an element in the serious battle of life. Easy-going acceptance of trial is ruled impracticable, for, by some means, difficulty must be fought and transformed by defeat. The solution suggests more than appears at a glance. The presence of the Lord braces the man, for he learns that human injustice possesses no divine sanction, while apparent divine injustice may assume another aspect when regarded from a higher standpoint. "God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven. . . . Then did he

see it, and declare it; he established it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.”¹ To overcome pessimism completely, by rendering it organic to spiritual progress, man has yet to learn how to set about the discovery, in intellect, will, and sentiment, of the implications of the presence of divine wisdom.

The author of *Ecclesiastes* approaches pessimism more closely than the poet of *Job*. Alone among Old Testament writers he furnishes testimony on behalf of that divine “aloofness” which has been too often charged upon Judaism. With none of *Job*’s imaginativeness, warmth is missed, and the impression of coldness is intensified by the didactic character of the work. Sustained reflection is accompanied by absence of sympathy, and by a laconic harshness that repels one. But the outstanding difference between the two books, from which the pessimism of the later proceeds, lies in the exclusively negative character of *Ecclesiastes*. *Job*’s hope, leaning on the justice of God, accepts what, for this world, is the old solution, and rests contented. *Koheleth* perceives the impossibility of obtaining any reply beyond the ancient lines, and is thoroughly conscious of the failure. He has no expectation, and so his pessimism is not “touched to finer issues.” With him ideals have all but disappeared, and his scepticism is depressingly prosaic. Is he, then, that unique phenomenon, a Jewish pessimist?

There is little, if any, room for question that *Ecclesiastes* was written during one among the many sad post-exilian periods in the history of Israel. The philoso-

¹ Chap. xxviii. 23, 24, 27, 28.

phical, rather than philological, considerations which we now desire to urge are little affected by the date which may be reasonably assigned to it, whether this be 450, 330, or 200 B.C. Evidence abounds to show that the historical circumstances were fraught with chastening influences for the writer, whom we may call by the name of his hero, Koheleth. The age of the prophets, with its imaginative fertility, poetic fire, and moral idealism, had passed away. The Sibylline period, filled with the fervour of revived hopefulness, was not yet. The favoured nation was passing through a vale of tears, whence the face of Yahveh seemed to have wholly disappeared. As a consequence, religion lost its former significance; it did not now enter as before into the commonest acts of the work-a-day world, ennobling them and charging them with a strange significance. Not indeed that worship was dead; but for some its old meaning had largely departed. It was no more performed as a matter of delight; calculation had almost imperceptibly taken the place of unquestioning compliance. The Jews, as represented by Koheleth, had entered upon a reflective stage, when, bereft of immediate bright prospects, they found time for present problems which, in better days, could hardly have occurred to them. The early promise of the national career paused in its efflorescence, and, perceiving the stagnation, the people sought to find its cause. Koheleth wrote at some such juncture, attempting not so much to frame a theory of the universe, as to silence a clamant question.

Accordingly, when we speak of the "pessimism of Koheleth" we must not be understood to imply any-

thing like the modern doctrine. Koheleth was no system-monger. He did not brace himself to account for the wretchedness of things. But, given enough and to spare of pressing evils, he asked, How can man best order his life in these miserable circumstances? "What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?" So far as we are aware, he did not, like Job, experience poignant reverses in his own person, and set himself to elucidate the mystery which involves the innocent in suffering. He rather looked round upon his nation and country as he happened to find them, and, constrained to declare, "behold, they are very bad," he attempted to distil all possible good from the surrounding evil. Bad as it all is, he seemed to argue, We are here, and may as well try to make the best of matters: how is this to be done most effectually? "Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. For he knoweth not that which shall be; for who can tell him when it shall be?"

One need not insist upon the contrast between this and the religio-optimistic view of life peculiar to the Jews in their more prosperous times. Faith has now completely given way to reason, the teleological interpretation prevalent in the past appears to affect the present scarce at all. It is as if a break had occurred in the continuity of events. The present is all in all, the past has gone, leaving hardly a trace, and as for the future, well, it may be left to look after itself. It is this aspect of the book which leads us to speak of Koheleth's pessimism. His attitude towards life as a whole, his absorption in mundane affairs, his extraordinary—nearly experimental—interest in self, above

all, his lack of inspiration in regard to moral problems, are characteristic of a state of mind which, perhaps in spite of self, cannot but be gloomy and sardonic, or if you will, pessimistic. The mood of the man, in contradistinction to his formal philosophising, is to be described by the word which for us bears an entirely different import. He did not try to improve deity out of existence, neither was it his aim to show that this must be the worst of all possible worlds. It would be truer to say that he gave utterance to the least hopeful, or perhaps the most forbidding, estimate of human life which a Jew, nurtured in the religion of Yahveh, could conceivably formulate. And in order to do this, he entertained doctrines, and limited himself as respected the range of his inquiry, in a manner which has been characteristic of pessimism in all its stages. Because he was a Jew, he could not be an atheist, like Schopenhauer and Hartmann, or even Omar Khayyam. Because he was a man, he was liable to those moments of weakness in which the body obscures the spirit, and when the necessities of an earthly to-day preclude any broad view of human life in its completeness. Schopenhauer may tell us to curse God and commit suicide, Hartmann may in effect declare that God is the devil, Koheleth has no such titillating message. But like the moderns, with whom he is so often wrongly classed, he sees all existence in the shadow of daily struggle. Men are here, they come no one knows whence, they strive awhile, and return to the same voiceless void. "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-

eminence above a beast; for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.”¹ Koheleth, hard pressed, as it were, by adverse circumstances, reflects where his forefathers had believed. Each fresh consideration of present ills, each *aperçu* of a nation’s disillusion, brought forth some new thought, some maxim more or less apposite to the case. Hence Koheleth’s self-contradiction. It is the self-contradiction of daily life. Only the change is perceived, and this to the total exclusion of the permanence without which change would be meaningless. We call Koheleth’s tone pessimistic, because he confines himself thus to the affair of the moment.

If this general tendency be scrutinised, several points of ethical interest present themselves. One and all go to prove that any examination of life which regards existence fragmentarily must inevitably tend to evaporate ideals, and therefore to generate moral scepticism. I do not say that Koheleth was entirely a moral sceptic; his remnant of faith in God saved him from this. But his customary attitude towards the ethical nature of humanity was such as to induce depressing doctrines. The attempt constantly is to explain man by reference to a less, rather than to a more, noble ideal of his mission.

What, we consequently inquire, is there in the moral attitude of Koheleth which led him in the main to adopt this course? The first, and perhaps the great, characteristic of the writer is his absorbing interest in the present worldly life. He is satisfied to consider what he sees; any higher conception is absent. To turn terrestrial means to the best terrestrial account

¹ Chap. iii. 19, 20.

is his ever-recurring problem. A usual accompaniment of pessimism in all ages, this position compels Koheleth to adopt a dispiriting estimate of the value and possibilities of human nature. Opportunism is the implied basis of morality, and time-serving, with its constant pursuit of an immediate, and therefore illusory, satisfaction, is the prescribed method of conduct. The importance of the moment, whether consciously or not, blinds Koheleth to the vastly greater value of life as a whole. Circumstances keep man so continually employed in the task of self-adjustment that he never has leisure to pursue the quest of self-comprehension. He sees one side of the moral problem with the utmost clearness. "Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity."¹ I am enduring hardness, he plaintively urges, but others shall enjoy the fruits of my fortitude. He forgets aught but his present work. All that others have done for him is made of no account. "Other men have laboured, and we have entered into their labours"—this has no interest for him. Nor, again, can he perceive that his own legacy may not be wholly good. "Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities." The moment bulks so large in his eyes that Koheleth's doctrine rather is, "every one liveth to himself." And yet, as the converse,—as the necessary accompaniment of his worldliness,—there is the feeling of disappointment with such rewards as

¹ Chap. ii. 18, 19.

man can gain here. Contemporary difficulties force him to discuss needs that now are, and out of this discussion he, in common with every thinker who so limits himself, can extract no saving, vitalising elixir. If man be but a creature who adapts himself to changing circumstances as they appear, then God help him for the most miserable of created beings. Koheleth has this suspicion—he nowhere formulates it—none the less it haunts him. “That which is crooked cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.”¹ Things must be taken as one finds them.

Consequent upon this is another mark of the pessimistic tendency. We miss a vivifying moral ideal. A principle of living, which is at once the motive force of character and its immanent end, is conspicuous by its absence. Such ideal as Koheleth has is mainly negative. Once, indeed, he nearly lights upon the truth. “He hath made everything beautiful in his time; also *he hath set eternity in their hearts*, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.”² The fact of human discontent—of the indwelling conception of a better state—could not be denied. Koheleth contented himself with merely alluding to the circumstance. Explain it he could not, for some aspect of living immediately interposed and suggested a new reflection. This absence of ethical exaltation is no more than the other side of what has been called Koheleth’s worldliness. The imperious demands of the present confine him to a fragmentary view of life. But the moral ideal is discoverable only when man’s career as a whole can be considered. Like all pessimists, Koheleth feels that the unrealised is the ruling

¹ Cf. chap. vii.

² Chap. iii. 11.

power in human nature. But he proceeds to explain this paradox in the wrong way. He thinks of life as a *progressus ad infinitum*; never, save as faintest "pattern laid up in the heavens," does he perceive the organic unity of holy living. The past has no place in the present, the present is all-absorbing; the future may or may not be, yet this matters little; it will be analogous to the present. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever. . . . The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun." This idea of existence as a cycle invariably characterises the doctrines of those who seek to explain the world in terms of itself. From nothingness, through sleepless horror, and back to nothingness; so Schopenhauer affirms. From an unconscious god who has brought torture upon himself, through the world—a blister to bear off his misery—back to the inanity of his pristine unconsciousness; so Hartmann alleges. The most advanced modern atheistic system-maker, like the early theistic rationalist, can see nought but an endless round in human life. This conception recurs again and again in Koheleth.¹ It is the natural corollary to that domination of the senses which issues in a mean, because partial, view of human worth. Life, if you confine to it the joys and achievements of the present, is but a gloomy-go-round; how much the more so if to these, its fleeting triumphs, the numerous incidental woes and crosses be added! If the purpose of a thing be only its momentary existence, man's very discontent renders him but the more accursed. For the

¹ Cf. i. 3-11, ii. 15-17, iii. 1-15, vi. 7, vii. 23-29, ix. 1-6.

“eternity that is set in his heart” finds in time nothing save the empty satisfaction of despair.

Another quality of Koheleth's thought, one which also accounts for his darkling deductions, is the individualistic or purely personal standpoint from which he judges everything. No theory of the universe is formulated, but certain experiments are made with self, and their results chronicled by way of instruction. In this aspect of it, the propriety of calling the book “a search for the chief good” appears. It is the record of a quest undertaken by Koheleth. As such, its results are binding only upon him. Yet he states them as if they might quite well be taken to apply perfectly to the whole human race. What may be called the isolation of the author has occasioned not a few among the many misrepresentations of his philosophising. He has been variously described, for example, as an Epicurean or a Stoic. True, some elements of the post-Aristotelian philosophies are present in his book. But they are not there after the Epicurean or Stoic fashion. The Greek individualists, no matter of what special sect, attempted to build up a really constructive theory. “Get pleasure,” some said. “Cultivate wisdom,” cried others. In both cases alike pleasure and wisdom constituted the be-all of life. To pursue either was to live aright; to obtain them was to be saved. But in Koheleth's case there is nothing of this. Glancing around him, he comes to the conclusion that all is not satisfactory, and he proceeds to accumulate facts for the express purpose of placing himself in a position to review, and perhaps to revise, his first opinion. He proceeds as an individual, and his observations have reference mainly—so far as they are *formative*, wholly—to his personal experience. The

narrowness of his basis accounts at once for the inadequacy of his conclusions and for their perennial interest. Viewing life from the insufficient standpoint of self, his results are almost necessarily characterised by grave defects. He sets his own finitude over against the infinite, and with all others who do likewise, he learns what a puny thing self is. He has not given himself a fair opportunity to comprehend its real greatness. At the same time, because he himself creates the conditions of his experience, his remarks possess a special interest. To satisfy himself that life is after all not so barren, he devotes every energy to the pursuit of pleasure. And, in common with other hedonists, he discovers that his ideal eludes him in its very realisation. He stands by himself, one might say, and notes the effect of sensual indulgence. "I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure; and behold, this also is vanity. . . . Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour; and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."¹ Koheleth was no fool, and very soon found that pleasure is the most unsatisfactory of "goods." So he addressed himself, again by way of experiment, to wisdom, and with little better result. "And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly; for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done. Then I saw that wisdom

¹ Chap. ii. 1, 10, 11.

excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness. . . . Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me ; and why was I then more wise ? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.”¹ Yet wisdom, interpreted as the Stoics never interpreted it, has some remnant of advantage. “Who is the wise man ? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing ? A man’s wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed. I counsel thee to keep the king’s commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God. . . . Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing ; and a wise man’s heart discerneth both time and judgment.”² Observation of self in different circumstances thus leads to the conclusion that neither pleasure nor wisdom can effect much amelioration of man’s lot, although the latter, in the guise of policy, may avert disagreeable politico-social *contretemps*.

The results of this semi-ironical self-inspection are identical with those which must always follow from the adoption of narrow or inadequate data. In their own fashion, and after the manner of the age in which they lived, writers like Baudelaire, Leconte de Lisle, and De Musset, arrive at similar conclusions. Their pessimism, indeed, is not finally lightened by the hope of divine interference in which Koheleth took refuge. But their attitude, as they survey the world, bears some similarity to his. Self-inspection, directed to determine the good or bad quality of life—always with a presumption in favour of the latter—is common to all. Dissection of personal feeling, spontaneous contact with the unclean, determination to “be even with” the intelligible, are,

¹ Chap. ii. 12, 13, 15.

² Chap. viii. 1, 2, 5.

making due allowances for difference in kind, the marks of Koheleth as of the neo-romantics. They all commit the extraordinary ethical fallacy of supposing that they can experiment with life, using themselves as apparatus and material, and yet remain unbiassed judges. The manner of their research, simply because studiously impersonal, was beside the investigation, and this reappears in their results. They present their experience of certain kinds of living as the essence of life, under the delusion that the conclusions stated can be regarded as rigidly scientific. Neither Koheleth nor his more modern, and perhaps less reputable, representatives had observed that it is not that which cometh out of a man that defileth him. We all know what they put in under the pretence of personal experience. Need we wonder, then, at the straitened view of life that they finally adopted. Koheleth's conclusion, so far as concerns the present world, is much the same as that of the Frenchmen. At whatever cost, man must rid himself of all craving for explanation of the unintelligible. He must endeavour to extract the most from such goods as he enjoys. "The sight of the eyes is better than the wandering of the desire."¹ Experience proves that a sane or rationally regulated enjoyment of what one has, carefully guarded against every extreme, is the best solution of the insoluble difficulty of living. "Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise; why shouldest thou destroy thyself? Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish; why shouldest thou die before thy time?"² Or, stating practically the same advice in another way: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer

¹ Chap. vi. 9.

² Chap. vii. 16, 17.

thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes.”¹ But, on the other side: “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.”² The secret of life, or rather such portion of it as does not elude scrutiny, is now out. When young, man is equipped to find joy in living, but if he misuse his youth, premature decay will exact an awful punishment. Koheleth, by his manner of procedure, almost precluded himself from ethical considerations. He escapes formal pessimism by assenting to the proposition that each may so conduct his career as to obtain some happiness. Or, emphasising the Jewish nature of such pessimism as he had, this world is so ordered that he who enjoys it has his reward, and he who loathes it has brought about his own punishment. A pessimist, in that he admits the irrationality of man’s discontent, he departs from his general tendency by acknowledging that the evils which men experience are commonly of their own manufacture, and by intimating that the fear of God is an admirable preventive of self-wrought misfortune.

But while thus holding that consideration of the present life only, absence of moral ideal, blindness to progress, and exclusive attention to self, are tendencies common to Koheleth with all pessimists, other points, peculiar to his nation and age, must be remembered. Of articulated philosophy, as Europeans from Plato onwards have understood it, there is scarcely a trace. The first fifteen verses of the third chapter form the single exception. From beginning to end there are few

¹ Chap. xi. 9.

² Chap. xii. 1.

sustained passages, and the connection between consecutive portions is seldom, if ever, maintained. Of this the quarrels of the critics furnish testimony enough. The fact is that *Ecclesiastes*, though it differs widely in some respects from the ordinary *chokmah*, or proverbial, philosophy, is after all a typical product of Semitic reflection. It has a certain unity of tone, but there is no logical sequence of expression. The standpoint is preserved throughout, but the author puts forth not the slightest effort to systematise his views. This disconnection renders the work a characteristic instance of Semitic philosophy. Unlike the other Wisdom Literature, it has no poetic fire, and little pregnant spontaneity. But it betrays the same spirit of observation and reflection—which we term philosophy—unrestrained by those logical or systematic limitations, without which Western thought does not formulate itself. Conclusions are propounded without much reference to their mutual agreement, and with absolutely no hint of the method by which they have been reached. As in most Oriental philosophy, statement takes precedence over ratiocination. For this reason chiefly one is disinclined to attach great importance to the presumed influence of Greek speculation, despite Mr Tyler's¹ skilful array of evidence and Plumptre's² most seductive ideal biography. Had Koheleth been imbued with Epicureanism and Stoicism, he would have preserved something of the formalism that marked these systems. Indeed the parallel can only be carried out, with any measure of success, by instituting a com-

¹ Cf. *Ecclesiastes*, a Contribution to its Interpretation. T. Tyler.

² Cf. *Ecclesiastes* (in the Cambridge Bible for Schools). E. H. Plumptre.

parison between isolated parts of *Ecclesiastes* and equally isolated sayings generally of the *later* representatives of post-Aristotelianism. And very much the same results might be manufactured in the interest of the opposite opinion by prudent selection of passages to illustrate points of essential difference. Koheleth is too characteristically Semitic, even although not typically Jewish, to be put into the strait-jacket of Epicureanism or Stoicism, and such presumed parallels as he does present may be equally well explained by reference to human nature as a whole. A man who finds political life rotten, and who takes refuge in discussion of the best means for the conduct of his own career in the circumstances, will, no matter where, arrive at conclusions similar to those reached by his fellow-men elsewhere and under analogous conditions. The elaborate apparatus of the pursuit of "pleasure," invented by Epicurus, and the machinery for the production of "wisdom" in use by the Stoics, are nowhere present in *Ecclesiastes*. Koheleth's "pleasure" is not the "pleasure" of Epicurus, nor is his "wisdom" that contemplated by Zeno. What the Greeks discussed, looking mainly to means, he gnomically propounded in the shape of certain aphorisms. The general looseness of his phrases contrasts strangely with the close welding of the post-Aristotelian systems. The Greeks, possessed of a well-defined method, directed their energies towards certain ends; Koheleth, guiltless of any particular convictions, formulated a view of man's life, the main quality of which is its adaptability. His pessimistic tendency lies precisely in this lack of system, from which the optimism of the early post-Aristotelians—that of Epicureanism and Stoicism, ere the one became Horatian

and the other semi-religiously sad—would have saved him. Equally, too, this freedom from formulism precludes him from being classed with the constructive pessimists of the nineteenth century. They declare that life is as bad as bad can be, and try to account for its wretchedness. He missed the signs of God's governance, which would have satisfied his Jewish instinct, and attempted to supply the want for himself. His problem was how to make the best of life, not how to fit it into a huge plan of universal damnation.

Finally, Koheleth's theism differentiates him at once from Greek philosophy and from modern pessimism. We can trace a double effect which it produced in his thought. On the one hand, his very belief in God seems to sadden him by its faintness. He could not have failed to be acquainted with the records of more fervently religious times in the history of his country. The testimony there borne was to the continual presence of Yahveh, whose watchful care ever secured ultimate safety and often averted impending catastrophe. Of this Koheleth could perceive no sign in his generation. So much so that he openly advised men to give up searching for evidence of God's hand in the current of events. "Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun; because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it."¹ No doubt the power of a foreign conqueror was tending more and more to interpose a seeming barrier of unfulfilled promises between the Jew and his God. Koheleth feels that the deity is not now so near to the people as he

¹ Chap. viii. 17.

must have been in the brighter and enthusiastic time when the prophets spoke their winged words. Filled with this sense of the aloofness of Yahveh, he is prone to urge the *fear* of the Lord. The positive side of this, the negative influence of his theism, is that the fear of God is a judicious thing, and likely to ward off many evils. It is mainly because his theism is thus dashed with grey, so to speak, that his teaching, even at its highest, is not far exalted. Lack of enthusiasm, painful uncertainty, and a dread of what might be, all tended to render him calculating rather than inspired. He saw much that he could not explain, and so the sphere of certainty was itself "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." On the other hand, Koheleth, in the last resort, supported himself on the traditional Jewish belief. Despite his scepticism and pessimism, he has this ray of hope,—that, at the last, God will see to the explanation of all these riddles. Man may be weak, his thoughts and pursuits may be vanity, but still God is there to be remembered. Life may be passed well enough if one but take advantage of circumstances as they present themselves. "The rest is silence." But it is the silence of a mystery of which God is at once the origin and the solution. Koheleth's acquiescence in this undiscovered ideal world-order is no more a convention than Socrates' sacrifice of a cock to Esculapius. Theism constitutes his pessimism a thing *sui generis*, and this is a result of Jewish influences, of which it may be taken as the typical remnant. A Jew might lose sight of God, he might sink to Koheleth's depth of discontent, but he could never reconcile himself to an atheistic conception of the universe. "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God

is in heaven and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few. . . . For in the multitude of dreams and many words are divers vanities; but fear thou God. . . . As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.”¹ This is the burden of his teaching. A pessimist all through his searching and in the tendencies which he exhibits, he is a theist from the beginning; and at the end, though with no further access of fervour, he still holds by his theism. A representative of the slowly dying ancient world, he yearned for salvation; a Jew, he sought comfort in the ultimate presence of deity; a man of the old time, he knew not God by wisdom. Yet it was the cry of Koheleth and of such as Koheleth—it was their search for salvation and their failure to divine its promise on earth—that prepared the way for the Christian revelation, nay, rendered it an imperative necessity.

IV. Jewish Theism and Pessimism.

Belief in God thus stayed the Jewish mind even when, face to face with the great mysteries of life, it sounded the lowest depths of despair. No matter what might happen, no matter what the doubts produced by foreign doctrines, Hebrew confidence in the moral government of the universe remained steadfast. When the pulse of faith beat slowly, as with Koheleth, hope lost not a little of its warmth. But complete paralysing of belief never occurred to bring about atrophy of ideals. To the spiritual eye, dimmed though it was, the future always scintillated in the far distance,

¹ Chaps. v. 2, 7; xi. 5.

even if nearer regions lay wrapt in darkness. Conviction that God already is all that man ought to be, not only inspired hope, but also produced a deep sense of human unworthiness. This misgiving, charged as it was with a large pessimistic element, possessed inestimable value as a religious and moral influence. Uncertainty, not now with regard to the mysteriousness of the world, but rather respecting man's fitness for divine favour, acted as a powerful incentive to righteousness. Very dismay in presence of sin revealed but the other side of a capacity, often of a resolve, to revive uprightness. This was the peculiar strength of Judaism. Under the influence of this conviction of defect, and in the light of the presupposition of deity which it implied, the Jews came to take their distinctive place in the van of religious advance. Their inveterate optimism was their reply to Yahveh's reproof; for, by his favour would they not rise to newness of life? The conception of the absolutely moral nature of deity gave birth to the consciousness of man's lapse. And, for this reason, the Jews were the first to realise completely the terms of the schism that sin implies. God is a co-operator with man, and cannot but fulfil his part. Man, however, is weak; the evil is that he transgresses against God, and the problem is how to wipe out the offence, how to prevent its recurrence.

Judaism, accordingly, denies speculative evil by implication, and thence passes to emphasise sin. Thus the enigma of conflict is removed from the universal to the individual sphere. Yet this narrow centralisation, seeing that it depended upon the presence of a special relation between Yahveh and the chosen nation, did not embody the forces necessary to a solution of the problem of defect in single lives. Hence the construc-

tive office of Jewish pessimism. Job and Koheleth, while appreciating the difference between the divine nature and the human, are prevented by the national idea from granting due weight to the identity. Thus the mystery of opposition to and from God remains a mystery. With the people as a whole, especially in the light of its past, the question does not press; for the Jew here and now the "existence of wrong in a world which had been created by the being who is the supreme God," the conditions of the problem only rendered it the graver, the more unanswerable. He can, and does, perceive that misery is disciplinary, but why it should torture those who, so far as man's knowledge goes, need no such chastisement, he cannot understand. For, "the destiny of Israel did not solve the problem of the individual soul;" it merely outlined the vocation of a part—shall we say, *the* part—of the human race. The educative power of transgression and punishment may help the Hebrews to contribute their share to universal history, it hardly appears to aid the separate soul in its self-cleansing. The ideal of the consecrated life has not yet emerged, and so remission of sin remains problematic, commission of fault certain.

Thus, reposing on faith in God, the dismissal of pessimistic questions is referred to a future golden age, such as that actually realised in *Job*; or, as with *Ecclesiastes*, divine wisdom must be held somehow solvent of all difficulties; or, as in later Judaism, present doubt is palliated by the conception of its elimination in another state. In whatever way he might regard virtue as its own reward, the Jew could not bring himself fully to comprehend why moral beauty of the highest order might be found flourishing amid the most unpromising

material circumstances. Herein the pathos—the vivifying pathos—of the Hebrew view appears. God is holy, not so man. Man has wilfully created sin, and God hates it. The distance between ideal and realisation has been fully discerned. Nevertheless, the direction to be taken in order to moral success is not, and cannot be, seen. The nature of the deity, who holds the ideal, has continued obscure in one of its most important aspects. Service of God *may* be—I do not think the Jew was ever fully persuaded of this—its own reward. But the God to be served has not fully revealed himself, and so the very implications of service remain partially unknown. There is a tendency, often something more, to look for the wrong sort of *summum bonum*. The end is not in God's own being, but rather in a selection from among his dealings with humanity. Thus the intellectual question, of the presence of evil in a cosmos, cannot as yet receive reply from the religious answer, which has regard to the import of the one truly ideal life. In fact, the intellectual and the religious problems so coincide that the latter determines the former, is not co-ordinate with it in a higher unity. Pessimism is ruled out of court, not because it is non-existent, but because resignation in hope, based on the conception of a *θεός* who cannot at the last oppose his own theocracy, quiets unrestfulness. Here, disquiet itself never can be put in a position to become organic to a new ideal. Faith accepts the confusion which confronts it without trying to discover whether this very aimlessness may not hold the promise of highest life. Adequate in perception of the problem, adequate, too, in fruitful ideality, neither the source of the one, nor the object of the other, is fully presented.

Practically Jewish theism tended to regard God as a person possessing rights, which he was quick to enforce, and as under obligations that he sometimes seemed slow to recognise. But this is not the whole truth. There were other elements which, had they been emphasised, might have mitigated the difficulties of Job and Koheleth. Indications are not wanting at least of a possibility of the recognition of God's, and man's, true infinity. The relation between deity and nature, for example, sometimes takes on an almost modern form. Wisdom, the emanation of the infinite, rejoices in the habitable part of the earth, and her delights are with the sons of men.¹ Again, the Lord's answer to Job out of the whirlwind, culminating in what is not unlike an undertaking of responsibility for

“nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravin,”

has little in common with that disregard of the world usually charged on Hebrew doctrine.² The direction in which the theory of desert and reward must give place to wider conceptions is not left entirely unhinted. The scope of God's direct dealings is being wonderfully extended in principle, if no more. So, too, man's faculty of communicating with the deity bears promise in some sort of its later potency. “Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.”³ “Thou shouldest call, and I would answer thee; Thou wouldest have a desire to the works of thine hands.”⁴ In principle, as yet unrealised, God and man are one. To reasoning with deity, man's divinity and God's humanity are ultimate postulates. And it is the germ, here

¹ Proverbs viii. 30, 31.

² Job xxxix. 27-30.

³ Ibid., xiii. 3.

⁴ Ibid., xiv. 15.

presupposed, of a communion between man and God, with the retention of their inviolable personalities always explicitly held, that points the means of escape from later pessimistic and pantheistic conclusions. If man can reason with God, he can never rest satisfied with the cyclic, impersonal presentation of existence that informs the lines—

“And therefore now
Let her that is the womb and tomb of all,
Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart
Those blind beginnings that have made me man,
Dash them anew together at her will,
Thro’ all her cycles—into man once more,
Or beast, or bird, or fish, or opulent flower.”

So, as against some modern redactions of Hebraism, it may well be insisted that the very strength of its God-consciousness implied elements corrective of the partial transcendence of the divine. In the following, for instance, we find a clear recognition of that oneness with the Most High which is the sole condition of successful grappling with the problem of sin and evil.

“Whom have I in heaven but thee?
And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.
My flesh and my heart faileth :
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.
For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish :
Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.
But it is good for me to draw near unto God :
I have made the Lord God my refuge,
That I may tell of all Thy works.”¹

Here, no doubt, a principle receives enunciation rather than reasoned justification. The important point to be noted is that this enunciation is of con-

¹ Psalm lxxiii. 25 *sq.*

stant recurrence in the most lyrical remains of Jewish literature. Man's life in God, his interest in recognition of unity with the divine, constitute one of the periodic themes of the *Psalms*. This has been too much obscured by those who would typify in Judaism a necessarily pessimistic religion. And it is the more important to correct this idea, that the composition of the *Psalms* extends over centuries, and, accordingly, they illustrate, not a temporary mood, but a pervading attitude of spirit. Of course these hymns, by their very nature, attempt no systematic account of their subject.¹ But they are charged with that conception of the "servant of the Lord" who in his service finds perfect freedom—finds in it the one sphere wherein highest spiritual ends can be achieved. The individual and the universal which, by the intense consciousness of God's holiness, tended to be incommensurate, are thus brought together. For holiness is seen to be the one condition of true happiness. Man's vocation is in God, or he has none. Both appear as real personal factors in a unity of purpose which holds the only motive force and the only promise necessary for the overcoming of evil, as for redemption from sin. "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Here Jewish theism in principle, if not in pacted theory, heals the eternal schism; and pessimism explains itself by explaining itself away.

How essentially this solution comes near being final we can comprehend only if we understand that religion and philosophy cannot destroy one another. In a sense they must rest eternally foreign. The one sees a

¹ Some of the chief Psalms, to which reference is made, are—v., xi., xv., xvi., xvii., xviii., xxiii., xxvii., xxxvi., li., lxiii., lxxiii., cxxxix.

completeness in the world towards which the other, if true to itself, must ever be stretching forth. Judaism, as exemplified in *Job* and *Ecclesiastes*, obtained this finality by an indifference to the opposition between good and evil, which was fortified by a belief in God, who "knew better." In its modern development, philosophy has reacted on religion, and has persuaded it that this attitude is unworthy. And so the religious man, thanks to his speculative brother, must to-day adopt an even more optimistic creed which, in his turn, the thinker is *now* laboriously working to justify. God cannot be any longer viewed as a mere power operating in the world. Humanity has found a truth more adequate to the conception of deity than this. While the consecrated life of Christ cannot, and was never meant to, reverse "laws of nature," it nevertheless incarnates that kind of career in devotion to which man takes doubt and sin, difficulty and evil, as incidents in a more or less successful attempt to become what Jesus altogether was. Death has no sting if life bear its own justification, and such is borne only when Christ is an immanent principle energising on all sides for ideal goodness. His office was to render doubt concerning a perfect spiritual state impossible. Here he fulfilled the expectation of *Job* and *Koheleth* by proving that for the ideal, when predominant in a man, evil exists to be overcome, and sin to be repented. And so, to the modern Christian theist, the appearance of temporal damnation holds the promise of eternal salvation. The defeat of the real bad by the ideal good, the assuaging of misery by devotion to the miserable, who can themselves be made to become spiritual successes, supply vocations which reveal the depths of man's nature,

as they are ends that the very existence of this nature implies. Innocence, broken by pessimism, truly cannot be retained. So much the better for humanity. Virtue accompanies temptation, which springs from every form of difficulty; and the reduction of obstacles can only be wrought out by men. One, indeed, has finished this work in his life, and, by recognising God in him, we find deity in ourselves. But deity with a mission. And every mission partakes in the characteristics alike of pessimism and optimism. The simple fact of its existence testifies to the latter, the very requisites of its realisation witness to the former. The modern man must needs fight under the ægis of the Holy One of the Jews. He so battles with certainty of ultimate success, in the name of Jesus alone. For the sinlessness of Christ does not mean absence of evil, but assurance that, despite evil, good, as exemplified in a consecrated life, is the mightier, because infinitely the more permanent, force. The devil, or unideal, cannot even "mend broken pots." God, or the ideal, *may* sow dragon's teeth, they cannot but spring forth *men*. Bad deeds possess no missionary power, but good deeds, varying in reproductive energy in the ratio of their immanent goodness, are destined to monopolise eternity. Yet, these ideals wait upon human disposition. God needs the aid of the pure in heart. If Job and Koheleth did not know this fully, those who live in the light of the one personal "servant of the Lord" stray in no such darkness. With Job suffering made the man; now all who care to learn can know what manner of man suffering essentially cannot touch. Life is capable of cheating only those who, in the deepest sense, have never been alive.

MEDIÆVAL MYSTICISM.

I. Introductory: the Mystical Movement.

THE course of mediæval civilisation ran along two main lines. The lordship of society was divided between the world-priest, the Bishop of Rome, and the world-monarch, the rightfully crowned Ruler of the Holy Roman Empire. In many respects a mere theory, this division between Church and World had momentous practical results. Together these lords constituted, as it were, the keystone of an immense edifice in which each separate part was related to, and dependent upon, every other. The system of the Latin Church had, in process of time, come to be a firmly welded organisation. It was the hammer of European society, compelling no mean amount of order, some education, and marvellous obedience from the barbaric materials which, in the years succeeding the fall of the old Roman State, disintegrated the community as it then was. Feudalism, though of later growth, came to exercise irresistible control over almost all the relations of secular and civil life. Dissociated in avowed aim, and

employing the most diverse methods, these two dominant powers were, nevertheless, not without inner connection. In particular, they both tended to treat with but scant consideration man viewed as an inviolable person, possessed by his very nature of inalienable moral and religious rights. Status, not personal worth, was the standard of social value applied by Church and World alike. According to the ecclesiastical theory, the most corrupt of the clergy was, simply in virtue of his office, superior to the saintliest knight or noble. In the hierarchy of Feudalism, the accident of birth determined the grade of individual excellence. For it is to be remembered that the Feudal system was a social, and in small part a political, organisation.

In this way personal character, on which we now set such high store, received little of its rightful recognition. A far-reaching code of external rules was applied to saint and sinner indifferently. The class to which the man belonged, his profession, or other purely accidental circumstance, rated his value in the eyes of his fellows. Narrow limits only remained within which men might be appraised at their own true worth; the heart received little heed; outer forms, admirably calculated, no doubt, to associate masses otherwise disconnected, were commonly wielded without reference to personal taste, attainment, or character. In short, the barbarism, which knows not the value of man as man, was civilising itself according to its own still barbaric methods. For a time this "protest of barbarism against itself" was certainly productive of progress. But from its very nature it could not continue for ever. Socially, and even more emphatically as concerned religion and morals, it contained

the seeds of its own destruction. "The angel's state, where law, life, joy, impulse are one thing," can never be reached by means of any external machinery, no matter how good. What is outside of us must always act upon us by compulsion. To be perfect, in the smallest measure, after the one pattern, we must be free to live his life over again, according as we have capacity. Personal holiness and personal worth are the only standards whereby the upward progress of any man may be adequately judged. For according as the individual ideal is, so will the life and character be. This, the intense reality of religious or moral convictions to those who are possessed of them, is the universal element in human nature to which the Mystics appeal. Questions of holiness and faith have a personal reference peculiar to themselves. At a time when circumstances were apt to obscure this aspect of the more excellent way, the Sermons of Eckhart and Tauler, and especially the 'Imitation of Christ,' came, not merely as a revelation, but also as a message of gladness to all, and they were then many, with whom religion was a vital matter.

Society in its mediæval stage of necessity tended to disregard this personal element in any soul-life worthy of the name. The temporary subordination of the individual was essential to the reconstruction of Europe after the downfall of the Roman polity. In due time, however, certain sensitive spirits began to experience a want, and this, when it found expression, marked the near approach of a new era. On one line Mechtild of Magdeburg, Sister Katrei of Strassburg, John Tauler, Suso, and Geert de Groot; on another, Master Eckhart and Ruysbroeck; on a third, Gerson, the famous Chan-

cellor of the University of Paris, were forerunners of Thomas à Kempis. He, in turn, was Luther's herald.

The renascence of subjective or private religion, which led to the foundation of such confraternities as the Beguines, the Friends of God, and the Brethren of the Common Life—to which à Kempis belonged—was characterised by a pervasive mysticism. In its earlier phases, ere special doctrines are formulated, Mysticism is admirably suited to meet a personal, or presumably personal, want. All great revealers in religion are more or less mystics, because they set forth a kind of life or faith peculiar to themselves. In its initiatory stages Mysticism is not a matter of dogma, but of character. The dæmon of Socrates, like the central convictions of Tauler, of Edward Irving, or even of Calvin, is so far mystic that it belongs, as concerns immediate effect on life, to one individual only. It implies personal devotion of the most elevated sort, overwhelming conviction and effort to put faith into immediate practice. There need be little wonder that a religious ideal, at once so vague and yet so definite, should suddenly have appeared in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The spiritually minded, like Tauler while still a student at Paris, were longing for some such new revelation with which to stay the half-understood craving of their souls. They found the appearance of religion in plenty but little of its spiritual vitality. They, therefore, vaguely cast about hoping to discover that of which they stood so sorely in need. And at first each sought in his own fashion. God, as Master Eckhart had announced, is the only reality. But, What is this God, and Where? How is He related to the individual man? To such questions almost any

answer may be given; and in solving them for themselves, natures of the most varied types found just the satisfaction of which they were in search. The active might strive continually, the repentant might be ever abasing themselves, the thoughtful might freely indulge speculation, safe from deep suspicion of heresy, the harassed might at last attain rest. In all these the predominance of the personal element, which was afterwards to appear in the guise of justification by faith, is plain. A new career of life and thought pursued by the individual, and largely regulated by him, opens a road to regeneration. Active participation in religious life begins to substitute itself for passive assent to creed or mechanical performance of ritual.

No age is completely or even fairly described, when labelled with the name of a dominant phase of thought. The eighteenth century, for example, although mainly rationalistic, had its undercurrent of pietism, of protest against the mean and destructive tendencies of the day. So it was towards the close of the middle ages. The severe discipline of long years had in many ways reduced religion to a mechanical round of external observances. Not that those were wanting who aspired to a higher devotion. But conformity was sufficient; regularity at mass and confession constituted a man religious, were he never so unrighteous. Profession and observance, to the exclusion of living faith and personal sanctity, did all-sufficient duty for Christian spirituality. Not a few among the clergy bore characters strangely in contrast with the imputed holiness of their office. But the value traditionally attached to classes amply covered imperfections pertaining to their separate members. In the

universities and other seminaries of learning an analogous spirit prevailed. The doctors of the Church were concerned more with the logical symmetry of Christian doctrine than with the actual personal reproduction of the Christ-life. They regarded religion as one might look at a curio. This way and that it was turned, viewed now in the dry light of syllogism, anon in the darkening of vain disputation. It often rested an object of interest, maybe of profit; it seldom entered into the heart, leavening the entire character by its subtle influence. The rise of Mysticism, about the middle of the thirteenth century, was largely due to reaction towards a more helpful conception of religion, towards a realisation of it in common life. This up-growth, it is to be remembered, took place within the Latin Church. Prejudice alone can lead one to allege that the ecclesiastical organisation was at this time guiltless of aught but hypocrisy and every species of sin. The Roman Church, like other great institutions, contained the forces requisite to its own reformation.

It is to be remembered that, while mystical thinkers and religionists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were connected somewhat loosely with the dominant hierarchy—in thought at all events—their doctrines, or at least their tendencies, had no lack of ecclesiastical prototypes. From the writer of the *Gospel of St John* a stream of semi-hidden wisdom took source, and never ceased to flow throughout the Christian ages. In the Eastern branch of the Church the pseudo-Dionysian writings of the fifth century, the ascetic Maximus in the seventh century, and Simeon, abbot of the famous Mount Athos monastery, with Pala-

mas, chief of the sect of the Hesychasts at the beginning of the fourteenth century, embody it. Throughout the Western section of Christendom its development was much more complex. Scotus Erigena, in the ninth century, may be said to have explicitly originated it; and, with varying fortunes, it continued to progress till the time of the Reformation. As already hinted, the movement almost invariably assumed the shape of a reaction. The prescriptive ethics of Christendom, which forbade many actions and enforced few personal or positively spiritual duties, stirred some to the species of reform best typified by Joachim of Floris and St Catherine of Siena. The formal metaphysic of the schools gave but little satisfaction to others, such as St Bernard of Clairvaux. The authority of the Pope was called in question by thinkers, like Gerson of Paris, who desired to reassert the domination of the Church, as represented by councils, mainly in order to widen the borders of her theology so as to include the rapidly spreading mystic elements. For many years these manifestations occurred entirely within the borders of the Church which, although often uncomfortably stimulated, never clearly perceived their ultimate logic. In broad outline, and as falling into two distinct periods, they may be traced with comparative ease.

While there was no necessary opposition between Scholasticism and Mysticism, the former, as representing the rational rather than the fiducial tendencies of the time, gravitated towards theoretical speculation. The controversy concerning abstract ideas, characteristic of its first period, fostered this intellectualism, which took extreme shape in the writings of Abélard (1121 A.D.), and of Gilbert de la Poirrée (1140 A.D.) The

uses to which they put their "dialectical" method brought them into conflict with the Church, and they were prosecuted at the Synods of Soissons and Sens. Bernard of Clairvaux (1141 A.D.), the instigator of this heresy-hunt, represents the orthodox yet mystic reaction of deeply religious natures—of men devoted to the practical accompaniments of religion—against the sceptical implications of abstract thinking. His mysticism has basis in the dogmas of the creed, and finds outlet in defence of the faith. It not only purports, like the philosophy of Abélard and Gilbert, to be within the Church, but exerts itself to perform many offices for the good of the ecclesiastical organisation. Complete self-abandonment is its motto. Contemporary with Bernard was another reaction which, while devoted, like his, more to contemplation than to reasoning, expressed itself in a semi-rational, semi-allegorical account of the relation between faith and intellect. More philosophical than Bernard, the Victorines (Richard and Walter, 1150 A.D.) devoted themselves, as he had done, to the fostering of belief, and so had his suspicion of the philosophers. They also were bulwarks of the Church. Beside both, once more, a third mystic reaction sprang up that earned the explicit condemnation, "with fire and sword," of the Papacy. Amalrich of Bena (1203 A.D.) and David of Dinant, reposing no longer on dogma, but appealing to an inner light, are the true forerunners of the Mystics proper. Amalrich's doctrines, alike in their strength and their weakness, are analogues of those which were to follow in the transition period before the Reformation. "Of his doctrine only three propositions have been transmitted to us with certainty: (1) God is all; (2) every Christian must

believe that he is a member of Christ, and this faith is as necessary to blessedness as the faith in the birth and death of the Redeemer; (3) no sin is imputed to those who walk in love. In these propositions there is already clearly enough expressed the Pantheism and the spiritualistic rendering of Christology, along with the historical denial of its facts, and that moral libertinism, which the later followers of Amalrich brought more clearly into view.”¹ These conflicts were succeeded by a mediating or combining theology, in which the methods and results of speculation—it then stood for science—were accepted and, by the interposition of a new scheme, rendered ancillary to the purposes of ecclesiasticism and dogma. Bonaventura’s (1270 A.D.) eclectic work, uniting doctrine with life, accordingly marks the close of the first period.

Meanwhile, with the rise and spread of the itinerant Orders, a fresh phase of activity had been appearing in the midst of the Church itself. Yet it was by no means exclusively attached to traditionary clerical ideals. The mendicant friars rapidly developed an unrest and independence of their own. The emergence of thinkers of the first order from within their ranks is, therefore, hardly surprising. To the Dominicans we owe Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and Master Eckhart; to the Franciscans, Duns Scotus and William of Occam. This second stage of mediæval thought centres round the eclectic and authoritative system of Thomas Aquinas (1270 A.D.) Here, at length, Platonising speculation and the faith of the Church were brought into apparent harmony. Philosophy and theology, being both concerned about God, could not well finally conflict.

¹ History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion. B. Pünjer, p. 43.

But, nevertheless, St Thomas was not solicitous for the faith in the same measure as St Bernard, and his identification of blessedness with *knowledge* of God embosomed pantheistic tendencies which Master Eckhart and others afterwards elaborated. Further, he had so completely associated Scholasticism with the tenets of the Church that his successors had perforce to seek other work. Accordingly, in the next generation the controversy between dogma and research again burst forth. Duns Scotus (1300 A.D.) emphasised the separation between philosophy and theology, giving, at the same time, a distinctively scientific turn to his thought by psychological inquiry. Carrying this independent and rationalistic bent still further, William of Occam (1340 A.D.), following Abélard, bestowed great attention on logic, and produced, under its influence, a theology of a somewhat negative nature. By thus secularising philosophical research to a considerable degree, he also laid the foundations of that independent style of investigation which brooks no authoritative interference. While, then, this partitioning of the Thomistic system was speculative, another movement, largely contemporary with it, happened to be religious. The vast abstract conceptions of Thomism obscured the faith for the common mind, and Mysticism, from Master Eckhart to Thomas à Kempis (1300-1470), acquired prominence as the new religious reaction. It brought a far-off God closer to man, and sought to devise a means of direct communication with him.

Certain social conditions of a more specially secular kind also prepared a place for Mysticism, and lent fervour to the reception of its doctrines. Chivalry and the crusading spirit induced highly characteristic re-

sults in the body politic. The World, as well as the Church, was at the moulding of the spiritual rebirth. For Chivalry originated a kind of love which, whatever its deplorable defects in practice, turned men towards an ideal—a human ideal. Aspiration, passion, disposition,—none of these describe its effects. Rather adoration than affection, rather contemplation than action, it became an all-pervading principle, swaying its slaves in wellnigh every act of their lives. Rapt reaching forth in spirit towards idealised womanhood at once caused its origin, framed its end, and furnished its reward. Mystical in essence and in exercise, this fruit of a bygone age exhaled an aroma that impregnated the atmosphere of daily life. And even among the orthodox mystics, with the Victorines and St Francis of Assisi, it passed over into the religious sphere, where, having in the interval been fixed for the benefit of all time in the ‘*Vita Nuova*,’ it was destined to become one of the premonitions of reform. That ideal, which with knights and ladies had been tarnished by grossest vice, common, too, to some less reputable mystical sects, Dante transformed into a purely intellectual devotion, and Eckhart and his kin raised to highest religious power as a spiritual and personal passion.

The Crusades, proclaimed in mystical exaltation by Bernard of Clairvaux, reacted in a similar manner. The expectations entertained by the religious warriors came to nought. They found that “Palestine was in no respect holier than Germany, that Jerusalem was just as lacking in holiness as Paris, and that the Holy Sepulchre was empty.” This “made plain to them that salvation and holiness are not confined to one

locality, and that the only Redeemer who can save is He who lives risen in the believers' hearts."¹ The horizon had been cleared, but, by a curious movement, it had also been narrowed. The relation to Christ ceased to be exclusively corporate, and became individualised. Further, the Holy Wars depopulated Europe, broke up family ties, made many widows, many fatherless, and left all in the heart-sickness of hope deferred. Then arose those associations, the Beguines, the Beghards or Weaving Brothers, the Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit, whose manner of life fostered mystic modes of thought, and whose comparative dissociation from the Church proved favourable to a measure of independence. Mysticism impregnated the air everywhere, and, at length, in the fourteenth century, it came to receive its classically systematic expression. Taking root with Eckhart and Ruysbroeck, it budded and exfoliated in every direction with Tauler, Suso, and Geert de Groot, till at last blossoming into ever-fragrant flower, it sent forth the 'Imitation' of Thomas à Kempis.

II. Mysticism and Pessimism.

Mysticism did not invariably operate in the same way, and, as a result, different types of doctrine and of character were produced. In a measure the ideal upheld was, as we shall learn, unattainable, and so, on interpretation, it occasionally fell very low, especially when accompanying liberty became an occasion for licence. Just as limitless indulgence, nay, unblushing vice, sometimes characterised monastic orders, so mystic

¹ History of Philosophy. Erdmann. Vol. ii. p. 542.

communities burlesqued the solemn doctrines of Eckhart amid scenes of open licentiousness. As Tauler bitterly exclaimed, "These Free Spirits strive after a false freedom, and, on pretext of following the inward light, follow only the inclinations of their own nature." But, apart from these debased excrescences, Mysticism assumed varied forms even in the course of its brief history. Some pursued it almost exclusively on the theosophical or theoretic side, while others were concerned, even more exclusively, with its practical results in the religious career. Master Eckhart and Ruysbroeck are the thinkers of the fourteenth century; Tauler, Suso, and Thomas à Kempis incarnate its religious genius. The thought of the former includes a clear objective element, in so far as a theory of the universe, especially in its relation to God, is attempted. At the same time, no strictly philosophical system is supplied, because the extinction of sin, always a prominent factor, constitutes a personal work, not to be accomplished by any pantheistic, or natural, unity with the universal spirit. This subjective side, in turn, by which Mysticism is ever differentiated from cognate speculation, gained high exclusive ascendancy among the apostles of the movement. Salvation, usually in the most personal sense, formed its one theme. On the other hand, the theosophists, or revealers of divine wisdom, furnished the immanent principles. With Master Eckhart, "God is the simplest essence of existence; and who, thinking of God, sees any distinction from utter simplicity, be sure he seeth not God." Man partakes in this divinity. For "there is something in the soul uncreated and uncreatable; there is something in the soul which is beyond the soul, divine, simple, an utter

nothingness; there is a place in the soul where God inhabits, and this base of the soul is one with the base of God. And to reach this obscure retreat of the Eternal and Divine, where the unconscious Godhead dwells—this is the supreme and final goal of all created things.” Ruysbroeck uses similar language, though dwelling more upon the effort to gain oneness with God than upon the nature of the unity itself. “In the rays of the sun the topaz surpasses in splendour all the precious stones; and even so does the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ excel in glory and in majesty all the saints and all the angels because of His union with the eternal Father. And in this union the reflection of the Divine Sun is so clear and so glorious, that it attracts and reflects in its clearness all the eyes of saints and angels in earnest gaze, and those also of just men to whom its splendour is revealed. So likewise does the topaz attract and reflect in itself the eyes of those who behold it, because of its great clearness. But if you were to cut the topaz it would darken, while if you leave it in its natural state it will remain clear. And so, too, if you *try to examine and penetrate the splendour of the eternal Word, that splendour will darken, and you will lose it.*” With Tauler, again, the eminently practical aspect at once emerges: “What is penance in truth and reality? It is nothing but a real and true turning away from all that is not God, and a real and true turning towards the pure and true good, which is called God and is God.” This religious aspiration, abasement, and self-abandonment are touchingly exhibited in his ‘Meditations on the Life and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ’: “And this one other grace grant me also—

namely, that my desires and affections may be so inflamed, that I may offer myself wholly to Thee in return, with the same burning love as that with which Thou didst offer Thyself to the Father for me; and that I may offer myself, too, with all my powers, as a living sacrifice, to accomplish Thy most gracious will in all things, both in what I do and in what I leave undone, without any choice of my own, and to bear whatever may happen to me by the permission of Thy goodness, in whatsoever way or by whomsoever it may come about; and that I may so free and purify the very depths of my being, relying on Thy help, from all selfishness, and sensuality, and impressions of images, and from cleaving thereto—in a word, from everything that can cause a barrier between my soul and Thee—so that naked, and without anything coming between us, I may be united to Thee in will, and love, and intention, and desire; and that I may thoroughly and wholly shake myself off from, and make myself naked of, all that is beneath Thee, so that Thou mayest have free space to work in me, and mayest accomplish Thy pleasant work in me without any obstacle; and that I, all free and unencumbered, may embrace Thee in the naked arms of Thy love, and rest for ever in Thee, and Thou in me, O most sweet, and loving, and gracious Lord and God! Amen.” True, the theosophical and the soteriological ideas cannot be separated. They are one alike in nature, in strength, and in defect—the three aspects under which they may be most conveniently viewed. After having considered these, we may look at Mysticism in its most clarified, if not its deepest, product, the ‘Imitation of Christ.’

By a pardonable enough error, Mysticism is commonly conceived to imply any doctrine or belief that appears to be mysterious, or tends to be difficult of clear statement. In this way, like the other cognate term, Transcendentalism, it often comes to be no more than a nickname. Whatever defence may be entered for such contemporary use of the word in connection, say, with spiritualism or theosophy so-called, it is only misleading here. No doubt, to the ordinary mind, which naturally looks outward and lays stress upon the things of sense, Mysticism, even in its most definite shape, must always present a species of enigma. For the semi-materialistic notions of irreflective experience are inverted by it. The soul rather than the body, the unseen rather than the perceptible, the ideal rather than the real, constitute the central truth of *human* life. The mystic seems to walk upon his head, because he emphasises much that is often lightly passed by, and clings to a great deal that is ordinarily never noticed. Yet, for this very reason, his system possesses a certain definiteness, even if his creed be too refined for any except the most spiritually sensitive. Master Eckhart and his followers set forth perfectly distinct notions regarding the nature of God, of man, and of the relation between the divine and the human. So far as formal philosophy is concerned, the Realism, or universalism, of Thomas Aquinas provided the point of departure. The thinkers and preachers who group themselves round the 'Theologia Germanica' were no vapouring sentimentalists. They had a solid backing of brain and sound learning. Eckhart, indeed, has been called the "Father of German Speculation." The mediæval

type of this speculation was Thomism, and the later Dominican brought to the religious interpretation of the thought of the earlier his own vivifying personality. The essence of theology is, in Eckhart's view, identical with philosophy, and therefore he makes unwearied effort to express in a definite body of doctrine all that he feels to be implied by his piety. Like his great predecessor, Thomas, he perceived that God must be the only reality; unlike him, he appealed to an inner light, which permitted no artificial restriction of its illumination. This divergence at once brings the Mystics of the fourteenth century into relation with their predecessors at the beginning of the twelfth. For, after the manner of Amalrich and David of Dinant, they took their stand, not upon the Church's interpretation of the Christian faith, but upon their own convictions, in so far as these could be derived from the Christian conception of human nature. To the authoritative Thomism there were thus added, not simply new doctrines, but, on the contrary, elements of progress in many directions according to personal idiosyncrasy. Much, accordingly, lay under the Church's suspicion, and finally this was justified by the development of open revolt.

The spiritual freedom which Master Eckhart originated is based on his doctrine of God and man. The former is gifted with extremest exaltation, to the latter a corresponding abasement is attributed. God is the sole reality, in the sense that nothing but deity can possess any permanent existence. The essence of being, that is, must from the beginning have attached to him alone, and must so continue to eternity. But a pure

being of this sort, containing no other qualities capable of apprehension, could not readily become known. So God, in order to his self-revelation, created an object for himself. From him the Son and the World proceeded—bound to him by ties of love as their Creator, Preserver, and Saviour. In so far as the creature is not one in nature with the Creator, it must necessarily stand in need of salvation—from itself. For evidently, if man exist as a being who has a personality of his own, and if at the same time God be the sole reality, then precisely in so far as man is himself, not God, he is nothing; and inasmuch as he lives to self he requires to be snatched from the void. The world is the speech of deity, meaningless, and therefore evil or useless, apart from its context, which the speaker alone can supply. Ultimate reality in man and the world must thus be God, all contingency is a mere indefinite, a not-God, and embodies the bad in its various forms. Evil stands coextensive with everything that does not partake in the divine nature. Though much that has no such participation seems to exist, it embodies no more than a relative being; it is a phenomenon, and as such it will assuredly disappear along with the temporal conditions which obtain in this finite sphere apart from the properties characteristic of deity. Partly, or in possibility, like Son and Spirit, everything shares in the divine essence; partly, and often in the larger degree, there cannot be such community. Everything incidental or perishable, every mere means, all accompaniments of the universal process, are nothing *sub specie eternitatis*. From another point of view, again, God energising in this world is not the whole of God. For, as Eckhart says, “there is a Godhead above God. The Godhead

neither moves nor works. . . . It is a simple Stillness, an eternal Silence.”

By a process of knowledge, man comes to recognise God's true nature, and, in the same way, he arrives at understanding of self. Christ was not this individual or that, but a part of the Divine who had become Humanity — had incarnated the spiritual essence of mankind, remaining free the while from the defects incident to the evolution of a definitely restricted personality. It is therefore necessary for each to know that he too is in a manner related to God as Christ was, but is in every other respect an utterly debased and meaningless being. Only thus can that control over the unessential and evil be gained which forms the indispensable condition to growth in grace and to progress towards reunion with God. The difficulty incident to adequate comprehension of this doctrine arises from its direct antagonism to the main modes characteristic of modern thought. The idea of development leads us to regard man as the highest result of the cosmic process, and so we try to read the universe in the light of an intelligence analogous to our own. With the Mystics this is impossible. The “God who is above Godhead” achieves most absolute reality when free from manifestation. So, likewise, the creature which is simplest in itself departs least from the divine type. Consequently, man, the most complex work of God, tends most to obscure his origin by the many powers and faculties which, as *the* member of a created universe, he evinces. As a result, he is more to be condemned than the “lower” animals, and, seeing that he must himself *learn* this, his knowledge, under penalty of godlessness, must surely lead to self-abasement. By an effort

of thought, it becomes man's duty to perceive that in his own nature eminently, as in that of all creatures relatively,

“Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until death tramples it to fragments.”

Death in life, however! Intellectual grasp of the worthlessness of man issues in practical recognition of the moral worth of humanity—which shares in the real being of God. Knowledge of the nothingness of self, annihilation of individuality, constitute the certain means of attaining eternal existence. But, as existence belongs to God alone, its eternity is not that of self, but of what was embodied in, and obscured by, the personal limitations inseparable from the finite state. He who thus overcomes self “seizes and binds” God, so that his will and His cannot escape co-operation. And this is the ideal mirrored in religion, sought in morality, recognised in knowledge.

The mystic doctrine of God and man, as one need hardly insist, comes to be wholly partisan; it is a theory of God only. Master Eckhart sees no possibility of salvation, which implies a return to God, unless emanation, inflowing from Him, be first admitted. And, although he and the immediate inheritors of his system condemned quietism, it is easy to see that a species of fatalism is implicitly involved. Mysticism may for a little be opposed to pessimism, it must eventually produce it. The Master himself counsels “freedom and movement,” because the one is necessary to the knowledge that he holds indispensable, while the other cannot be separated from the inner disposition fruitful in truly good works.

So, too, his immediate co-workers, Suso and Tauler, although interested far more in love and contemplation as practical matters of religion than in formal speculation, strongly discourage quietism. Suso's book 'On the Nine Rocks'—which one must *scale* to gain spiritual perfection, and Tauler's exhortations 'On following after the Poverty of Christ's Life,' sufficiently indicate the kind of activity inculcated. Nevertheless, both emphasised the contemplative side of faith more than Eckhart. His enthusiasm for the mystic life of thought did not so deeply influence them, for they were devoted more to the pietistic aspects of religion. Personal temper and inclination focussed their interests. They felt the worldliness of the Church, which had been growing apace, and thus experiencing a clamant want of direction in personal piety, they pitied the people sunk in religious ignorance, and preached the new and more excellent way to them. External religion they condemned. Tauler taught that "outward rites and observances are not necessary to the essence of piety. . . . Let those who torture the poor flesh learn this. What has the poor flesh done to thee? Kill sin, but do not kill the flesh!" To this extent he was so far negative. But, on the positive side, he would admit every kind of pious endeavour, provided it were inspired by the "faculty of love in the soul,—the will of a man. Ye are bound to visit and console the sick, remembering the bitter pain and death of Christ, who hath made satisfaction, not for your sins only, but also for those of the whole world; who doth represent us all before God, so that if one falleth innocently under the ban, no Pope can shut him out of heaven. Ye should, therefore, give absolution

to such as wish therefor, giving heed rather to the bidding of Christ and His apostles than to the ban, which is issued only out of malice and avarice." Personal piety is set over against, and exalted above, the direction of the supreme pontiff. No doubt the presence of many sects which made Mysticism a cloak for laziness, roguery, and licentiousness, called forth from Eckhart and his school stronger warnings against cloistered asceticism, with its correlative prurience, than they might otherwise have felt impelled to promulgate. But, as events were to prove, the inner logic of the doctrine from which they set out proved all too strong. The superexaltation of deity, and the contrasted abasement of man, conspired to the institution of an ideal far too abstract on the speculative side, far too unattainable on the practical. The spiritual quintessence of human life, conceived as a contemplative communion with God apart from any known means of intercourse, overshadowed attendant doctrines; gradually, but surely, the "God above Godhead" wrested nerve from the earthly career, till a species of inactive ecstasy supervened. The world, the varied experiences of daily toil, the sweet opportunities of neighbourly fellowship, served only as obstacles to reunion with God. Life had perforce to be emptied of all that it held for the development of the soul. Otherwise man could never forsake his nothingness for "the desolate wilderness and deep abyss of unsearchable deity." But, if life be nothing, and if the All in All be desolate and unsearchable, what, save despair, awaits the spirit that seeks salvation in self-destruction, merely to return to a Beyond bereft of every definite quality?

The predominating personal note in Mysticism is at once the key to its strength and the source of its defect. Master Eckhart's sublimely spiritual conception of the universe depended, not simply upon a philosophy devoted to pantheistic speculation, but also upon the strongly distinctive genius of its originator. On the other hand, the contemplative inactivity of pietists, like Johann von Oechsenstein, found origin in the personal twists, so to speak, imparted by over-exalted feeling to ideas which had once been rationally systematised. The passionate devotion of the former, ecstasically expressed in the words, "Thou shalt sink thy thine-ness, and thy thine shall become a Mine in His Mine," descended all too easily with the other to a state of religious somnambulism, reserved for the spiritual virtuoso, and destined to a *progressus ad infinitum* the goal of which was no more than the negation of aught that the world could reveal. The one was constructive and, so far, virile; the other was negative and entirely weak.

The lasting importance of mediæval Mysticism, then, lay in the effort exerted by its chief professors to render religion concentric to a new ideal. External dogma might, and did, remain to a large extent unaffected; but the quest after redemption took fresh direction and received new impetus. The inner man, not the outer formulæ of his faith, now became the theatre of exploration. Thought and feeling and will, to the exclusion of creed and confession and penance, came to be regarded as the sphere of saving merit. Immediate unity with God, obtained by devotion to the things of salvation, formed the real heart of religion. Mysticism was accordingly strong, as it impressed all the warmth

of inward feeling, all the exaltation of creative imagination, into its service. Each one became implicitly his own priest, whose office was more or less efficacious just as his spiritual being happened to be fervent, living, growing. To me to live is God, to die is gain,—this was its motto. The doctrine of the indwelling of deity lent enthusiasm to believers, for it brought them in their own highest life face to face with the one real Being in the universe. Self-purification, which departure from sin implied, was constituted a pre-condition of divine illumination. God could not be brought into communion with one who remained unclean. Finally, man, having by personal effort put away evil, having by the rapture of his own contemplation learned the nature of deity, might, by sudden intuition of his own oneness with God, enter into complete union with him. Vague as these ideas are, they bear witness to an elevation of will, and to a depth of feeling, which could not but have been of marvellous influence for good in an age when religion had, for the most part, fallen to the level of acquiescence in a machinery designed to secure ideal ends by the basest of real means. Of the many plans originated by the Church for its own reform, this, which was not specifically reforming, was perhaps the most significant, certainly not the least successful. In any case, its permanent significance and temporary success lay in the strength of the personal heart-communion with God on which it so lovingly lingered.

Yet, although it thus involved both individual and universal elements, Mysticism did little or nothing to bring them into organic relation with one another. The necessity for salvation from self was pressed home by too extreme denunciation of man's nature as it now

is. The goal of saving faith was exalted too much, and so the theory fell into separated parts. Extirpation of the self, because it here and now obscures God from men, came to be the path to true life. Self-sacrifice, not in the sense of self-discovery in the service of others, but as a movement of destruction, provided the only cure for the mischief of personality. Deity, in whom alone man is able to live eternally, has no knowable qualities, except, indeed, those associated with existence. Men must therefore strip themselves of all the accompaniments of life in order to arrive at the *actus purus* which, though in soul, has disappeared from view amid the accretions due to bodily form and specialised character. The individual and universal are thus at extremest odds with each other. And they cannot but remain so, because the progress of the former to the latter is essentially incapable of positive portrayal. Through annihilation the saint achieves a state that *is* unknown, but *may* be termed godly. But to the average soul the universal is somewhat hypothetical, while none can fail to understand the excessive derogation of the individual. Man emanates from God, and his origin is therefore with the highest. Yet, by the very fact that he is human, he has, in his present condition, departed as far as it is possible for him to depart from his source. He has fallen as the animals are incapable of falling, and so the distance to be traversed back again to truly spiritual being is nigh infinite. Here the defect of Mysticism finds centre, and hence it gradually spreads. For, as God is the type of good, man is the type of evil. The path of redemption is difficult ; no specific directions mark it out. The end is often imperceptible, for

it is incapable of description by finite analogies. The starting-point—the present situation—alone remains clear, and it has been relentlessly condemned. On these premisses, the effort after unity with God implies the submergence of all differences. Each must sink back into self in order that selves may disappear. And, as the desiderated unity is vague and formless, the method of elimination—of burying the talent lest it produce others—attains wholly undue and, in the end, fatal, supremacy. Each ought to give up everything in order that all may arrive at nothing. Necessarily whatever renders life worth living came to be proscribed. The good man was such in so far as he “stood aside from the path of inheritance and left it to the ruffian and the sot to bequeath his evil tendency to his country for ever.” Virtue is rendered unnatural, where possible; where impossible, self-sacrifice is erected into an end in itself—it actually becomes self-regarding.

As a practical scheme of salvation Mysticism failed. He who must toil in order that those who depend upon him may live, is undoubtedly the subject of unrest, assuredly often experiences the pressure of human defect, and realises the need for its removal. But how can he devote himself to the contemplation requisite? Set, as he is, amid certain social conditions, how is he, while performing his duty towards man, to work out his justification with God? Mysticism offers no answer, nay, dispels every hope of reply. For the worldly career, even in the tenderest aspects and holiest duties, is a continual defection from deity. The so-called reformers before the Reformation supplied no gospel for daily life. Religion needed a specialised energy which

led from the obligations towards family and friends, towards country and humanity, back into the tiny circle of the single soul's desire to sink down into the abyss of infinite and indescribable non-existence. The blessing of an ideal capable of being realised even in the lowliest earthly tasks never even occurred to the Mystics. Christ was the elder brother only in so far as he remained nearer God than others of the human family; and his humanity, being submerged in his divinity, came to be regarded but as a vain show, assumed simply for the purpose of being cast aside. The unity of the God-Man never received recognition, and the uniqueness of his consecrated life conveyed no message of comfort. The separation between God the universal, and man the individual, so operated that the Mystics saw in Christ anything rather than one tempted in all points like as we are. Eckhart's thought, Suso's piety, Tauler's preaching, were effective in their day, because this implicit tendency had not yet revealed itself. They swayed the people, in spite of Mysticism, by personal character and unsullied purity. Nevertheless, they distinctly taught that the world and life held nothing worthy, and so they eliminated the one sphere in which man, the ideal-real being, can find the opportunities requisite to salvation. The best satisfaction they could offer to the widespread spiritual want of their age was, on the one hand, a passionate but negative precept to strangle self; on the other an assurance that, when self had disappeared, a positive but momentary union with God might be attained,—a union in which sin had no place, because nothing remained whereto it might attach itself. Of this and such as this despair is the inevitable conclusion. For

at the close, when man has achieved personal annihilation, the import of ecstasy comes to be nothing beyond the bare term. The initial Realism ends in an abstract Nominalism. The denudation of life is pushed to such a point that nought remains whereby to differentiate the long-sought consummation,—all has, of a truth, been cast away, and the reward is a blank.

Consequently, Schopenhauer and Hartmann can plead full justification when they claim the Mystics as forerunners, or seek to show that the evaluation of such tenets inevitably results in a plea for pessimism. For, remembering what Schopenhauer was, one will readily believe that not without consideration did he characterise Eckhart's teaching, in comparison with that of the Gospels, as "the essence of wine to wine." It is curious to find the chief iconoclast of everything pertaining to mediævalism thus extolling the least valuable portion of Mysticism for his own purposes. But, indeed, he could not help himself. The conviction that self contains a core identical in essence with the one reality in the universe results in a *positive* internal search which is the other side of a negation of external things, including the body. This produces that pietism, or foregoing of activity, which, in turn, is the single means of realising unity with the deity. But, as Schopenhauer says, "if something is none of all the things which we know, it is certainly for us, speaking generally, nothing. But it does not yet follow from this that it is absolutely nothing, that from every point of view possible and in every possible sense it must be nothing, but only that we are limited to a completely negative knowledge of it, which may very well lie in the limitation of our point of view. Now it is just here that the mystic pro-

ceeds positively, and therefore it is just from this point that nothing but mysticism remains." But the message of Mysticism is of nought, and so, when reflection upon the uselessness of life supervenes, pessimism supplies the one conclusion possible. The "will to live" has been negated, but to small purpose, seeing that the consequence is itself a negative. In Hartmann's view, again, the separation between individual and universal is "of inestimable worth." It is consonant with the theory that man, the most supremely conscious of beings, flows from the Unconscious and must return to it. The conviction, inexplicable by any of the mystics, but experienced by them all, that God and man meet at a certain inner point, implies an object of knowledge which "cannot at all appear in consciousness." Because consciousness obtains its knowledge from sense-perception, this "inner light" can be nothing but "the filling of consciousness with a content (feeling, thought, desire) through involuntary emergence of the same from the Unconscious." To achieve freedom from material conditions, and thus to fall back into the absorbing Unconscious, must accordingly be the moral and religious ideal. Individual and universal, as they now are, incarnate no absolute good; destruction of them is the duty of duties. And if in his present state man have no possible participation in the spiritual nature of the infinite, as the mystics assert, some such pessimistic conclusion is alone open to him. He rids himself of self-deception only to discover that he has parted with all that best characterises his being for a bare something which, at the very most, is incapable of positive description. This earth must be the worst of all worlds, because it forms the opaque veil excluding heaven; and heaven is so utterly

lost in absence of earth's joys that, though it might well be hell, it must meanwhile continue to be nothing in particular.

III. Thomas à Kempis, Mysticism and Pessimism.

It would be unfair, and even misleading, to leave mediæval Mysticism thus, having considered only the logical consequences which it embodied, and having made no reference to its one memorable contribution to the heritage of the Christian ages. With Thomas à Kempis it stood freed from consciousness of its speculative presuppositions, and was exhibited rather on the practical side as the mainspring of a profound piety. His book bears hardly any direct trace of Eckhart's theories regarding the universe: it is everywhere pervaded by a sense of sin, and by a consequent struggle between the good and the bad will. The 'Imitation of Christ' forms the record of a lovely soul, touched, maybe, with weaknesses incident to ideals too high, and, as we would now say, too mistaken, for man, but none the less, as the event has proved, exhaling an odour of sanctity pleasing and stimulating to believers of the most divergent creeds in the most varied circumstances. Nay, is it not matter of common knowledge that, with the single exception of the Bible, no manual of devotion has exercised so much influence, or received such universal acceptance? The soldier on active service, the quiet scholar, the busy man of affairs, the religious devotee, have alike sought, and continually found, in it edification, solace, or confirmation in the faith. Just because the number of its debtors is thus legion, many and

most varied reasons are assigned for the ubiquitous power with which it operates. Nor, from another point of view, is this strange. Why should a series of reflections, put together by a Brother of the Common Life in the early years of the fifteenth century, appeal so effectively in more instructed, if not more religious, times to people of the most opposite beliefs? Not only strict Catholics and stricter Protestants, but liberal thinkers of every opinion,—not only Christians all the world over, but also Arabs, Turks, and Chinese,—have entered into sympathy with its sentiments. There cannot but be some cause for this. May not the work appeal to an integral element in the constitution of human nature itself? Must not this very element, moreover, have been hungering for satisfaction at the time when the book was written? With highest probability we may answer, Yes. For no book which continues to be a well-spring of life throughout the centuries but has affinity for some essential quality in man, a quality to which its first inception had been in large part due. Be this as it may, a side-light can be thrown upon the secret of the universality of the ‘Imitation’ by a brief consideration of several circumstances attendant upon its historical apparition, and of some among its many characteristics which are particularly indicative of a certain social environment. It may be taken for granted that the main strength of this, as of all great books, is most intimately connected with the causes to which its chief defects are traceable.

Spiritual movements, Mysticism like the rest, generally pass through a well-marked development. Their first manifestation usually takes place in the work of a specially gifted man or woman. Then a society is

formed for the deepening and sustenance of the spiritual life freshly generated. Finally, articles of faith are drawn up. Hereupon the personal element in the phase begins to vanish, and the association becomes a sect, memorable chiefly for the greater or lesser errors connected with the teaching of its founder. In the time of Thomas à Kempis the society had been constituted; but full vitality still remained to personal religion,—no taint, doctrinal or practical, of pantheism or of immorality had supervened. Some Brethren of the Common Life dwelt together as scholars united in congenial pursuits. Others, preferring a more distinctively religious career, entered a monastery—a house of Regular Canons—in connection with the confraternity. To the latter, or clerical membership, à Kempis belonged. His book is the one memorable attempt, made in a so-called unspiritual age, to furnish a manual of personal devotion, formulated in a sense, yet capable of interpretation at the discretion of each. It has appealed to the most differently gifted in every later day, because it deals with realities which cannot be fully understood, with a life which cannot be adequately described, with a faith which cannot be completely expressed; because, in short, it discusses difficulties which must be interpreted by each in secret when the sinner is alone face to face with his God. The ‘Imitation’ is mystic, and this without the main evils of Mysticism. God is revealed as the one “infinite eternal God. Whatsoever is not God is nothing, and ought to be accounted of as nothing. All that is not of God shall perish.” Nevertheless, he is not to be reached by any process of ecstasy, but by leading a dedicated life. Not a series of empty negations, but an inner principle bringing the character

more and more towards perfection, will help the believer to the "gladness of the just which is of and in God. A good life maketh a man wise according to God, and giveth him experience in many things." For such an one sin has more terrors than death. According to mystic doctrine, the old self has been annihilated; the annihilation is but the beginning of a renewal of life in which the want, born of evil, is in gradual process of extinction—a consummation wrought by growth in holiness.

The book presents a strange, a puzzling mixture of universality and individualism. This is the more perplexing, because the former is unreal, the latter imperfectly developed. The universality, to which reference is now made, has already been before us by implication. Thomas à Kempis was within the pale of the Church, and he partook in its spirit of fictitious universalism. In language traditionally familiar to priest and monk, he set forth rules of holy living. As the Fathers had written so wrote he; materials, which had been handed down from generation to generation of churchmen, were used by him. Consequently, his appeal was, not consciously to all mankind, but to all members of the organisation which arrogated to itself the headship of the world in matters spiritual. In its language, as in the circumstances of its cloistered composition, the 'Imitation' is distinctively Catholic, taking that term in its mediæval sense. Often it recommends the ascetic life, which, according to the judgment of centuries, was the better part. Authority of an external kind is recognised. Submission to the powers that be is counselled as prudent, if nothing higher. In these, and many other respects—particularly in the first, second, and

fourth books—the work remains wholly loyal to the organic ideal of Catholicism. The example of the Holy Fathers, humble submission to religious discipline, the eucharist duly prepared for and frequently received, may support the Christian, may in themselves better his life and character. These are survivals of the conceptions prevalent throughout the middle ages. True, in that they recognise the organic relation of men to each other as social beings, they are inadequate, because they regard society as meaning the Church only. The forces of individualism, which were to burst forth in the Reformation, to the removal of this error, had not yet been generated. In the ‘Imitation’ they are implicitly present in spirit, but wholly absent in form. Personal religion is exalted. Yet the organisation of the Church, being mistaken for the organisation of the universe, still tends to impede the free progress of individual members. Thomas à Kempis perceives rightly that God is the most real being in the world, and presses the absolute duty of finding him, in order to stay one’s self upon him; but he fails to understand that the operation of the human spirit, here implied, is above and beyond the Church, that God is himself directly “upholding all things by the word of his power.” Sometimes the intervention of the Church is explicitly urged. “A priest clad in his sacred vestments is Christ’s vicegerent, that he may beseech God with great supplication and humility for himself and for all the people. . . . He wears the cross before, that he may bewail his own sins; and behind him, that out of compassion he may lament the sins of others, and know that he is constituted, as it were, *a mediator between God and the sinner.*” True, this intercession is made by a certain organisation

for all who conform. It is universal, because it is one for peer and peasant. It is partial, because it leaves little room for the recognition of individual effort, which in no wise depends upon membership of this, or of any other, limited community. Thomas à Kempis still holds that there is but one way to Christ for all; and, in so doing, he misses the force of Christ's own revelation, "I am the way."

But, despite this, the disintegrating process, which culminated in the Reformation, is already at work. The conception of personal devotion occupies an altogether unusual position, even although it is not fully developed. Once and again Protestant writers have alleged that Thomas à Kempis "does not sufficiently illustrate the doctrine of Justification by Faith." No doubt he does not. But had he done so, the value of the 'Imitation,' as a calm, untheological exposition of personal religion, would have been greatly minimised. Had à Kempis laid stress upon Luther's central idea, his book would now be "filling its place and period." It harmonises with the most opposite opinions in every age, because it manifests a wider, a more characteristically human, principle than justification by faith. The amazing vitality of the 'Imitation,' its inimitable simplicity, its real but impalpable intensity, one and all centre in its insistence upon life rather than belief. The world was sick of dull acquiescence in a series of formulated doctrines when à Kempis wrote. When many finer spirits were longing for a less vain form of godliness, he met their want by pointing out that sincere self-conviction of sin could issue in regeneration only if a new life were led according to the indwelling principle revealed by

Christ. And his book touches all, because it shows what a reproduction of the Christ-life ought to be, emphasises its practical necessity, and yet leaves each free to apply the general maxims to his own case in his own fashion, so be that righteousness may result. He sees that the Christian life is an ideal—realised once on earth assuredly—and that, as such, it may lead different men by varied ways, working always through the most characteristic possibilities of their infinitely diverse natures. The Christian body is one, but its members are many. Each is to be justified by the use to which he puts his talents, although without the life of Christ the goodness which all contemplate and desire would neither be known nor wished. Thomas à Kempis did not fully realise the organic relation of God in Christ to every human soul, but he urged that those who, as members of the Church, were favoured by such a relationship, must give proof of its existence in their own walk and conversation. In an era when a mechanical conception of religion was dominant, he saw that the Christian life implied a growth in character for all alike; and he recognised, too, that growth, although the manifestation of a universal principle, could not but differ in every individual case. It is the scope which is thus given to the personal element in Christianity that constitutes the 'Imitation' the most universal of religious books after the Bible. No man can be Christ, though his truest life comes out from Christ. As a Christian he can only achieve what it is in him to become. The ability to progress towards this pattern is from the Master; the effort, the good will, is the disciple's. The book, however, as a product of the fifteenth century, limits

what we may call the opportunities of the Christian. And, as it is universal within its own bounds, so, too, is it individual.

One can as easily fix "sacred selfishness" upon à Kempis as blame him for neglect of justification by faith. The freeness of the last to mankind, as a whole, he could not then know, nor could he perceive the all-embracingness of Christianity in relation to common life. Accustomed himself to monastic society, and writing at a time when centuries of acquiescence, with their weight of tradition, had set the seal of perfection upon the ascetic ideal, he was not to be expected to enunciate the personal interest of Christ's example in all its most vital relations. We are bound to honour him, not merely for his recognition of the believer's own part in the religious life, but also for the insight with which he set this forth, limited as he was by his environment. The separation between Church and World, which characterised mediæval society, had, time out of mind, invested the cloistered devotee with special sanctity. Thomas à Kempis advanced beyond this, perceiving that the monk must *be* good, or his manner of life makes him not one whit better than his busy neighbours. But he also assumed that the Christian ideal could be more satisfactorily attained by the cœnobite than by the common man of the world. This is the limitation which his age put upon his individualism. Notwithstanding, his simple assertion of the personal import of faith is the most striking part of his work, and, remembering the historical conditions, this is also its one characteristically unique element. Not the Church, not the acceptance of the creed, not even the reception of sacraments, but a man's own active reach-

ing forth towards the good, will, in the end, save his soul. And this saving of the soul, or interest in one's own spiritual state, is the key-note of the 'De Imitatione.' It is not difficult to stigmatise such anxiety as selfish. But this is to confound personal aggrandisement hereafter with what à Kempis really speaks of—personal excellences sought, with much painful effort, now and here. The desire to be one's best immediately, to live in such a manner that all the highest aspirations of humanity should have free course, implies the presence of a spirit which will enable one, at the same time, to achieve most for the ennobling of others. Thomas à Kempis may exalt the monastic ideal, but he has the root of the matter at heart. For he has grasped the fundamental truth, far harder to be seen then than now, that personal goodness is the first requisite for interest in, and effort after, the goodness of others. It boots little that he contemplated a comparatively narrow sphere as best suited to the upgrowth of holiness. He concerned himself first with the attainment of that which, when achieved, would work as a social leaven. The 'Imitation' does not provide for the removal of external aids to holy living; it nevertheless earnestly enforces the absolute necessity of holiness. In an epoch of sham religion, sham morality, and vended licence, the first requisite was a firm insistence on individual purity, on the personal aspect of a "life hid with Christ in God." This Thomas à Kempis gave. And, if he failed to fathom the universality of such a life, if he did not fully see that it could be led in market-place, castle, or court, as effectually as in monastery, under cowl, or around cathedral, he is not to be despitely treated. His book was the result of, and the answer to, a

craving which countless numbers of Christians were experiencing in his day. Nay, it is, in some sort, the reply to a question which Christians, ay, all men, in every age cannot but put to themselves: What must *I* do, not necessarily to save my own soul, but to become the best that it is in me to be? The endless interpretations put upon his words by after generations, the solace extracted from them by soldier and saint, by thinker and toiler, are witnesses to their substantial insight. The set purpose towards goodness in all sorts and conditions of men, which has been confirmed, if not induced, by continual recurrence to his pages, constitutes a practical refutation of his detractors. Within limits, the 'Imitation' set forth a vital religion; in time these limits ceased to be. Men have laid hold upon the human element in it, and have universalised this for themselves. The general principle, which à Kempis so beautifully revealed, thus reproduces itself in the most ordinary corners of the workaday world as effectively as in the conventionally sacred circle of professed religionists. For all are equally concerned in the matter. "Why dost thou not provide for thyself against that great day of judgment, when no man can excuse or answer for another, but every one shall have enough to answer for himself?"

The requisite provision once seemed most accessible in the ascetic career. Perhaps it then was. Protection from the rudeness of manners when might was right, opportunity for self-denial when self-assertion was rife, above all, quiet for meditation in troublous times, may have been best obtainable in the cloister. But, even allowing this, the 'Imitation' accentuates that element

of living interest in the relation between God and self which, whatever the circumstances of the individual, is at the regeneration of the soul, constitutes the motive force of the renewed life, and essentially gives direction to the transformed personality. It matters little whether the man be monk or minister or worldling. If the fact of living contact with the Christian character be lacking, neither ostentatious profession, nor equally ostentatious rejection, of belief will alter the life so far as the ideal of goodness is concerned. Thomas à Kempis saw this with the greatest clearness; here was the central factor in his work. He was a Catholic, and not free from the defects incident to a particular system at a specific period in its history; he was an ascetic, and tended to despise the world; he was a recluse, and apt to think that the sphere of holiness had artificial limitations. But, in spite of all, he has touched *the* chord in every human heart. *My* interest, *my* faith, *my* effort after the ideal life, are prerequisites of *my* holiness. Aught else is as nothing, if I stand in no actual relation to the Master whom I desire to follow. Christ's is the only character which can regenerate. Yet even this belief is not enough. Personal acceptance of the faith must be succeeded by constant effort to realise the ideal character in one's own life. Otherwise God need not have vouchsafed man his eminent revelation of himself. The 'Imitation of Christ' is one continued insistence upon the urgency of personal religion. Tenderly or indignantly, in deep self-abasement or in mystic elevation, sorrowfully or joyfully, Thomas à Kempis ever calls upon men, with a simplicity and earnestness that cannot fail of effect, to dedicate themselves to the reproduction, here and now,

of the Christlike character. Because it is so, his book will always remain a solace to the devout, a rebuke to the sinful, and a revelation to the repentant.

While, in fullest measure, an aid to faith, the work cannot be said to embody the whole essence of religion. Just as the power of Mysticism was upon à Kempis, continually refreshing personal piety, so too it restrained him and directed his pen after another fashion. Like other Mystics, he desires holy living, not learning, not pleasure, not applause. Satisfaction of the innermost needs, in so far as these can be apprehended and stayed, directs the practical aim of his piety. "What will it avail thee to be engaged in profound reasonings concerning the Trinity, if thou be void of humility, and art thereby displeasing to the Trinity? Surely great words do not make a man holy and just; but a virtuous life maketh him dear to God. I had rather *feel* compunction than know the definition thereof. . . . Endeavour therefore to withdraw thy heart from the love of visible things, and to turn thyself to the invisible." But the life, as contrasted with the speculation or activity, which he wishes to lead is restricted. In the third book—which, by the way, ought, in accordance with the tenets of Mysticism, to be taken last, because its faith crowns all religious aspiration—the fruitions of sustained resignation are set forth. Consolation, contrived by the efficacy of divine grace, gifts the believer with a halo of inner glory. This, however, can only be gained at an expenditure which, when reflected upon fully, is little short of appalling. The real battle of existence seems to be given up, and, but for the small impregnable corner defended by the lonely self, retreat is sounded

all along the line.¹ "It is no small matter to dwell in a religious community, or monastery, to hold thy place there without giving offence, and to continue faithful even unto death. . . . Here therefore men are proved as gold in the furnace. Here no man can stand unless he humble himself with his whole heart for the love of God." By consequence, the life contemplated, even when directly described, is partial. Social difficulties, with their corresponding virtues, receive scantiest notice; domestic trials and joys, with their day-in, day-out forbearances and minor offices, obtain none at all. The book accordingly paradoxically presents what, in modern language, would be called a want of individuality. For if, as we have tried to see, individuality be its strength—rendering it capable of fresh interpretation by each to suit his own case—it is also the source of its weakness,—restricting its application to but a few, comparatively speaking, of the difficulties in which life abounds. This limitation is traceable to the characteristics of Mysticism in general, which have been already noted. The continual reminiscences of *Ecclesiastes* point to à Kempis' conviction of the emptiness and vanity of this world. Here is betrayed the negative side of that overwhelming positive aspiration to God which has rendered the work of such permanent worth. The intensity, as is usual, must needs claim compensation in a certain narrowness. The spiritual horizon gleams effulgent with the glory of God, but is no more than an arc of brightness amid the intense surrounding gloom of life. As before, too, the individual and the universal fall apart. The natural career of the former

¹ Cf. Book III., chaps. x., xxxv., xxxvi., xli., xliii., xliv., xlviii., lv.

is an actual hindrance to holiness. "If thou wilt withdraw thyself from speaking vainly, and from gadding idly, as also from hearkening after novelties and rumours, thou shalt find leisure enough and suitable for meditation on good things. The greatest saints avoided the society of men when they could conveniently; and did rather choose to live to God in secret. One said, 'As oft as I have been among men, I returned home less a man than I was before.' And this we find true." God, on the other hand, is already all that man is not. So, à Kempis is not satisfied with counselling retreat from the evils of the world; he actually approves them. Life ought to be so forcible in its badness as to compel withdrawal and contemplation of the divine purity. "Alas! what a life is this, where tribulation and miseries are never wanting; where all is full of snares and enemies! For when one tribulation or temptation goeth, another cometh; yea, and while the first conflict is yet lasting, many others come unexpected one after another." Nevertheless, "Although this present life be burdensome, yet notwithstanding it is now by thy grace made very gainful." The earthly career, like a sharp goad, should cause man to flee; his inner illumination should lend direction to his flight. The relation between the worldly and the religious is entirely negative. No place remains for spirituality in the life that now is, saving and excepting it be stamped out and some new thing substituted. Little acuteness is required to perceive that this is Master Eckhart's theory unconsciously expressed in a practical manner. Speculative treatment is conspicuous by its absence, but the same ideas, sometimes the very words, are repeated. And the defects are identical. When he

looks to God and to the future in the Godhead, Thomas à Kempis nearly always inspires and purifies. He here persuades each that his personal case has been under review, and so bears home some message of comfort. When he turns to man, and takes note of the things that now are, he is as weak and unsatisfactory as he formerly was vivid and enheartening. The two sides appear to have no relation; they do not even possess sufficient connection to enable them to shed any light upon one another. Hence the extreme value of his doctrine of Christ, imperfect as it is.

But, after all, man is here, and his needs relate to the problems originated by a present world, part evil and part good. À Kempis counsels resignation, in order that the clash of difficulty may not drown the sweet, still music of the far-off Spirit. Poor satisfaction for the earnest battling soul tossed by doubts, worn by cares, surrounded by mysteries. If, as the Mystics tell, there be a God from whom the world proceeded, why did he allow man thus to fall into a state which contains nothing but hindrances to goodness, and which, when comprehended, only creates a masterful demand for its own destruction? There is not even the suggestion of an answer. Here, precisely, Mysticism, be it Pagan or Christian, is foredoomed to failure. To it the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, and the Elder-brotherhood of Christ are empty phrases. For one and all imply just that divine principle energising throughout the present life which the Mystics, by their unmeasured condemnation, completely preclude. Their doctrine comes dangerously near to pessimism, not simply because it sets God afar off and sees in him only an eternal not-ourselves, but because

its conception of life is so desperately mean. If this life be despicable, man had far better never have been born. If it be impossible to reach forth to ideals, and partly grasp them, here below, then the tragedy of existence lies in the fact that it is lacking in the barest elements out of which tragedy might conceivably fashion itself. The worst that could befall would be something more Heine-esque than a tragedy. "Frightful should it ever suddenly occur to one of these people that twice two are properly five, and that he therefore had miscalculated his whole life and squandered it away in a ghastly error!" What, further, if Mysticism be true, and the ghastly error be the sole possible interpretation of existence?

But even here, when we force him to his lowest, Thomas à Kempis is, as we have seen, not without meaning. "The days of this life," he says, "are short and evil, full of sorrow and straitnesses. Here a man is defiled with many sins, ensnared with many passions, held fast by many fears, racked with many cares, distracted with many curiosities, entangled with many vanities, compassed about with many errors, worn with many labours, burdened with temptations, enervated by pleasures, tormented with want." Are we not too often ready to burk all this, to thrust it aside or to hide it, not because it is terrible, but because it is difficult and troublesome? À Kempis, on the contrary, faces it in his own way. This method, as we have tried to see, is mistaken, and, but for its christology, based on a misconception of the worth of the world. The existence of the problem, however, must, as with him, be firmly accentuated. With him, too, an effort must be made to solve it. Pessimism is the final resort of the saint, of

one who would turn his back upon man's estate like most Mystics; of the knave, who knows just enough about life to deem himself able to laugh at it; of the coward, who is overwhelmed by his surroundings, and would beg, or rather whine, off; or of the thinker, whose thought, in his own self-delusion, turns upon a negation. All agree in failing to attach sufficient importance to the questions of which they would be rid. But the Mystic teaches, most forcibly of all, the seriousness of living, and the necessity for salvation. He alone fully persuades us of the presence of a spiritual element, and, by this very persuasion, leads us to perceive, what he himself never saw, that evil, sin, vice, and crime, though all too terribly incident to finitude, are capable of being turned against themselves. Man's divided nature, when its parts are regarded as members of an organism, ceases to impress merely by its division. The conflict between its members is the other side of their growth. The ideal may be good, the seemingly actual may be bad. But, as the development of the latter in humanity is dependent upon the former, the moment the bad elicits the onslaught of the good its evil assumes an altered complexion. God, as Thomas à Kempis and kindred spirits held, must be the ultimate in man, as in the universe. He cannot be such, if one ungodly part contain no meaning. In the language of religion, it was made ungodly to the glory of God, and therefore never was ungodly and this only.

H A M L E T.

I. Introductory.

THE wise saw, "Hamlet" without Hamlet, implies even more than is usually understood by it. There is a sense in which the Prince of Denmark is not only the hero of the play but its single character. In Shakespeare's other tragedies events occupy the larger place. Here, on the contrary, the internal progress of personal idiosyncrasy demands, and obtains, almost exclusive attention. The evolution of the tragic situation is psychological rather than quasi-historical. Probably for this reason the central character has been subjected to numerous, and somewhat varied, interpretations.

Shakespeare's ordinary dramatic method may, without offence, be termed objective. Men and women, influenced by well-defined, even familiar passions, are set before the spectator. Common life is represented. Love and hatred, jealousy and revenge, pride and envy and ambition, affect Romeo and Juliet, Iago and Othello, Portia and Shylock, and Macbeth, very much

as like impulses are supposed to sway people now. In other words, the Shakespearean Drama exhibits a certain action or series of actions. One man decides to pursue a particular course of conduct, and, as a result, others are moved to deeds valorous or evil. Society, revealing itself in the mutual interaction among its many units, constitutes the subject-matter. Discussion of motives is the exception, representation of their consequences is the rule. The spectacle of human experience, to the exclusion of speculation concerning its inner nature, is rendered in the play. The social side of life, necessarily predominant in the delineation of practical affairs, tends to divert attention from the subtler movements of personal character. Accordingly, the hidden, almost sub-conscious, laboratory of motive remains unexplored, its apparatus and processes are left to be gauged mainly by results. It thus happens that in "Othello," say, there are several principal personages. The progress of the drama is essentially dependent upon their relationship to each other, and is little concerned with the thought-life of any one. - In "Hamlet," on the other hand, the thought-life of the hero is the drama. Here, far more distinctly than elsewhere, Shakespeare employed the dramatic method with which Browning has familiarised us in these days. The subjective career of a single individual, as contrasted with objective social occurrences, constitutes the *motif* of the tragedy. The action is consequent upon a state of mind peculiar to one person, and this mood is prominently brought before the reader. No doubt Shakespeare never worked the subjective method with Browning's pertinacity. But in "Hamlet" he so far departed from his customary manner as to

subordinate an entire play to the inner conflict of thoughts, sentiments, and passions raging within a single character. Hamlet is as like Faust as a seventeenth-century "philosopher" could be like a nineteenth-century idealist. So in this play, as compared with the others, we are interested in an exceptional personality, rather than in a society composed of people whose moving passions are still rife. Or, if this antithesis be too sharp, the society interests us chiefly, perhaps exclusively, as a main factor in the production of the hero. "Romeo and Juliet" exhibits the interposition of a family feud between devoted lovers; "Macbeth" depicts the progress and results of unholy ambition; "Othello" sets forth the twin triumph of hatred and jealousy. "Hamlet," on the contrary, presents a tragedy founded on a much more deep-seated and irremediable antagonism. (The hero ought to control events, but a schism within his own nature renders him the victim of circumstances. He sees both the good and the evil in the world, and their incompatibility oppresses him like a nightmare. He hesitates and finds himself continually baffled, because he is altogether unable to perceive how sin may be overcome of suffering. The tragedy lies in the havoc which this, the seeming inexplicableness of human life, works with his delicately sensitive moral susceptibility.)

In the development of man's spiritual nature three successive stages may be detected. And the more distinguished the personality—that is, the better representative of the order to which he belongs—the more clearly can this evolution be traced. In childhood, and in the years of early youth, the difficulties and trials of life, like the enigmas of existence, make no appeal

to the mind. They do not try the unstrung moral fibre, nor are they productive of doubt in the immature intellect. The world and self are accepted without question, and the mere joy of living largely obviates the need for any theory of the universe. At a later age, the fact that men and things impinge upon self, hampering action and shattering ideals, looms larger and larger upon the mental horizon. The "clever young man," as his ill-advised friends love to call him, is not necessarily conceited in the conventional sense of the term. He is rather driven into an attitude of opposition by hard-and-fast social conventions. In the nature of the case they present obstacles to his aspiration. He would fain reform the world by adjusting it to his own notions. But he has still to learn that the bare possibility of such adjustment implies forgetfulness of self, and co-operation with others. For reform, like charity, begins at home. If the young man who is not a radical, in the broad meaning of the word, be a fool, his wiser compeer, who confounds reform with mere destruction, is in no better plight. On the other hand, when it is recognised that the inevitable clash between legitimate self-assertion and social interest is only a means integrally related to a higher end, then the third stage in expansion of character has been entered. The antagonism, it is now perceived, is neither permanent nor self-resolving, but its opposing elements become organic to a larger whole. Many fail to arrive at a clear consciousness of this desirable reconciliation. The weight of sorrow, incident to man's lot, often bows the sufferer down, with the result that he cannot straighten himself to look fairly around. Difficulty bulks so largely with many minds that their

balance is disturbed. Not indeed that madness is the consequence. Rather a confirmed habit of thought is engendered which, revealing itself in some subtle want or peculiarity, arrests attention. Mental development, in short, is incomplete if man never arrives at a point whence he can begin to reconstruct the universe of self with some kind of confidence. Lifelong division within self, although it marks a nature which is already on the way towards perfection, is frequently accompanied by a distaste for society and a feebleness in action which, at length, come to constitute impassable barriers to full self-possession. Hamlet appears to have been in some such case. He is typical of a class who have a far wider intellectual outlook than the self-externalising Philistine. With them breadth of view is accountable for unusual, or perhaps we had better say well-considered, conduct. The children of this world, wiser in their brief generation than the children of light, hastily ascribe this departure from crass custom to madness. The comfortable citizen thinks the next-door Hamlet an idiot. Both are so far satisfied probably—the one with his opinion, the other that his neighbour knows him not. But the Hamlet is justified rather than his censor. For the more reflective perceive that he is only incomplete, and that his very incompleteness, in its early stages, is an earnest of better things still to be.

It is well to notice that, while some such conception holds true of most spiritual growth, its present application is subject to certain limits. The poetic presentation of character cannot be a complete one. We must not expect to find in "Hamlet" a perfectly articulated philosophy of life. Just because the drama, with its

poetic interpretation of nature, is in question, a satisfactory philosophy is not to be sought. Philosophy attempts to discover the ultimate truth of the universe, to lay bare principles which exercise constitutive power in every sphere of being—in the humblest as in the most sublime. Its business is to set forth the unity of nature, man and God, and to call attention to the presence of this welding force in particular thoughts and phenomena, no matter what. The drama, seeing that it is a form of poetry, has a similar, but not identical, aim. For poetry in its entirety, like philosophy, prosecutes a search for the absolutely true. But as an artistic, and not a philosophical, whole, the poem, and especially the drama, naturally contains a greater or less admixture of untruth, of fiction. "Poetry," as Plato said, "is a noble lie." It is false, in so far as it purposely alters the environment of the true to secure the more vivid representation of one or another portion of the truth. It is noble, because, despite its designed disregard of the real, it stands in vital relation to all that is deepest in life and thought. Hamlet is a type of those minds that are so crushed by the difficulties which evil places in the way of realising ideals, as seldom to be able to rise to an appreciation of the indispensableness of conflict in the course of mental or moral growth. Nevertheless, he is not in any full sense the representative or mouthpiece of a philosophical theory,—*pace* the Germans. The art of the dramatist altogether precludes any such conclusion. The people of the play have been rendered subservient to the soul-development of the hero. It has been so contrived that, Horatio excepted, "the time is out of joint" in the persons of all the actors. The ideal sphere which

Hamlet himself inhabits is thus brought into relief by contrast with the real world in which he moves,—a world expressly constructed, with all Shakespeare's art, for this purpose. The awe-inspiring tragedy of the drama lies in this lurid opposition. Hamlet is set in the midst of a society whose wickedness is imaginatively delineated. As a whole it is too bad to be actually possible. Not only is it permeated by evil, degraded by pettiness, and honeycombed with treachery, as these are ordinarily understood, but it is also pervaded by a general mysteriousness, due apparently to the presence of an inexplicable, and in common life non-existent, malevolence. There is something suggestive of artifice in the combination of events to thwart Hamlet's righteous intention. No doubt, Shakespeare's matchless skill never permits one to feel this impression strongly, yet the fact remains. For the introduction of the exceptional, or of the partially untrue, is artistic. The piece is constituted a "play" by the concentration of attention upon one occurrence—Hamlet victimised by untoward events—to the exclusion of other factors which, as none can help feeling, would necessarily be present in real experience. It is not the work of the dramatist or poet to formulate a theory of life, but to mirror this or that aspect of living in all its fulness. It is not his aim to inculcate moral lessons, but to delineate human—that is, moral—nature in some of its moods. The manner in which he combines his materials to subserve this purpose is witness to his power. The fineness of his frenzy is at once the measure of his departure from the absolutely true, and the condition of his partial revelation of veritable truth. Shakespeare, as a great artist, had need to

choose his materials in order to give dramatic unity to his work. In real life such selection is impossible. But, on the contrary, life contains, among others, precisely those elements which the poet deems peculiarly indispensable to his artistic creation. The isolation of a part heightens its impressiveness, though it detracts from its credibility. "Hamlet," therefore, is to be regarded, not as a philosophical theory concerning the influence of evil, but as an imaginative combination of evils exhibited in its power over a single soul. The hero is a type within limits, and in discussing his character we have to bear in mind that it is bodied forth as an artistically designed creation, not as a really true, or even possible, life.



II. Hamlet's Moral Condition.

In his own degree, Hamlet is the only one among Shakespeare's characters who is a standing enigma. He appears to possess a secret which, like Frenhofer, he carries with him to his grave. The complex qualities constitutive of his inner being are so disintegrated by surrounding influences that his "single state of man" loses its native unity. By an indefinable process, baffling in its subtlety, doubt, disgust, dismay—call it what you please—atrophies the moral fibre, and a nature which once bade fair to attain a large measure of perfection misses its mark, suddenly stopping short, as it were, in the midst of its normal expansion. Yet, were it not that the contradictions of life had found ally within Hamlet himself, they could not have overborne him thus. "We are always accomplices in the evils

that oppress us." This inner reply, as it may be called, to outer questionings, is best seen in relation to that "pale cast of thought" traditionally associated with our hero. Hamlet's neighbours, with several significant exceptions, considered him mad, because he regarded the world from a point of view that they could not appreciate. He possessed a mental grasp to which none of his fellows could for a moment pretend. His frequent vein of irony—a trait strangely overlooked by many—shows that he occupies a level whence he can look down upon others of more limited perception. His vivid realisation of the absolute value yet comparative ineffectiveness of man, constitutes his distinctive affinity for the embodied evil without, and renders him the more easy prey to adverse circumstances. His irony is of the highest importance, in that it springs from his central being, and almost invariably sways him when in society. In solitude his candour with himself borders upon the awful. When he soliloquises, he reveals not a little of that knowledge which is the root of his bitterness. Even ere he had heard the dread tale confided by the Ghost, a distinctly marked phase of his irony is illustrated, one, moreover, in which he plainly suggests that *his* understanding has its peculiarities. In virtue of them he claims a certain superiority for himself:—

"Seems, madam ! nay, it is ; I know not 'seems.'
 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
 Nor customary suits of solemn black,
 Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
 Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
 Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,

That can denote me truly : these indeed seem,
 For they are actions that a man might play :
But I have that within which passeth show ;
 These but the trappings and the suits of woe.”¹

Again, in the famous scene when Polonius is dubbed a fishmonger, the garrulous old fellow, misunderstanding even to the point of failing to observe Hamlet’s caustic mockery, assumes that the Prince is mad. Yet once and again he all unconsciously comes very near the truth :—

Pol. What do you read, my lord ?

Ham. Words, words, words !

Pol. What is the matter, my lord ?

Ham. Between who ?

Pol. I mean the matter that you read, my lord.

Ham. Slanders, sir ; for the satirical rogue says here, that old men have grey beards ; that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber, or plum-tree gum ; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with weak hams. All of which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down ; for you yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

Pol. Though this be madness, yet there is method in it. [*Aside.*] Will you walk out of the air, my lord ?

Ham. Into my grave ?

Pol. Indeed, that is out o’ the air. How pregnant sometimes his replies are ! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter. [*Aside.*] My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal ; except my life, except my life, except my life.”²

¹ Act i. sc. 2, line 76.

² Act ii. sc. 2, line 192.

Take but one other example, this time of a quality entirely different. The possession of the knowledge which induces Hamlet's ironical frame of mind is attested from his own lips in the classical speech to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and with such emphasis that it cannot be overlooked.

"I have of late (but, wherefore, I know not,) lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises; and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me, no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so."¹

Whatever his thoughtless associates may have surmised, it is impossible to regard as mad the man who can speak thus; nor can his acts, save some few really played for Ophelia's benefit, be ascribed to feigned idiocy. Rather he is dismayed by the incomprehensibility of life, and recognition of this mystery induces a certain hesitation altogether unaccountable to those who, happier in their unconsciousness, can contrive to be merry and heedless, and yet to remain satisfied with themselves.

So heavy proves the burden of care in Hamlet's case, that hesitation, with its resultant inactivity, becomes an end in itself, and in thus missing its use as a means stunts the whole character. The soliloquy on life and

¹ Act ii. sc. 2, line 292.

death is typical of the process which results in this transformation. Hamlet would fain be at home with himself in his spiritual being, and so evade those dread realities which obscure and limit the ideal. Yet, for the moment, he sees only one way of escape. To be up and doing is but a small part of his thought. He reaches longingly forward to the state that will be after death. But with its mere mention, this bears the suggestion of other doubts, difficulties, and obscurities; these may prove even more disastrous to the self-possession and upward growth, that ought to be here and now, than the known evils and experienced cares incident to the present life. The last do press all too heavy, the former might be entirely unbearable, as indeed the Ghost had suggested:¹—

“ To die : to sleep ;
To sleep ; perchance to dream ;—ay, there’s the rub ;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause ; there’s the respect
That makes calamity of so long life ;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,
The pangs of disprized love, the law’s delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin ? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover’d country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of ?

¹ Cf. Act i. sc. 5, lines 13 foll.

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all ;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.”¹

Hamlet appears to acquiesce in the fact that man was

“ Created half to rise and half to fall,”

and to accept this general statement as a final account of his own nature. Thereupon, wholly preoccupied with his discovery, he stops to turn it over in his mind once and again. For what is this soliloquy—especially if regard be had to its spiritually reflective tone, found nowhere else in the piece after the same kind—but an apostrophe to the mysteriousness of the spiritual, to its incommensurableness with the material. The immortal is revealed only in the mortal. In other words, spirit cannot express itself directly. It is known through a medium, and subject to the limitations inseparable therefrom. Yet, notwithstanding, the material cannot be defined save in terms of the spiritual. Here is the irreducible dilemma. In the poetic, and therefore partial, manner, it haunts Hamlet like a second spectre. So doubtful is he of what the spiritual may become here, or of what it will be, hereafter, that he is almost glad to accept darkness and mystery and imperfection, seeing that only under their dominion can he learn anything whatever concerning his own nature. He has a secret, and keeps it, mainly because he never fully comprehends himself. With him the transition phase of doubt and despair gradually hardens into a habitual

¹ Act iii. sc. 1, line 60.

state, and his attempts to resolve contradictions only serve to confirm him more in the conviction that mediation is impossible. He is never able to raise himself, like Abt Vogler, to a point whence he can catch a glimpse of the beatific end of earth's worst failures:—

“There shall never be one lost good ! what was, shall live as before ;

The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ;

What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more ;

On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven, a perfect round.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall exist ;
Not its semblance, but itself ; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist,
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard ;
Enough that he heard it once : we shall hear it by-and-by.”

His vision not thus enlightened, the contradictoriness of things remains for Hamlet an obverse of which the reverse is unknowable. Were there not an ideal reverse, on which doubt was sealed as the handmaid of faith, no man could see life and live. And it is because Hamlet is an imaginary, not a real, being, that he is able to endure, even throughout the brief period of a drama, the unrelieved spectacle of the increase of sorrow. In his tardy vengeance, executed in a moment of a passion, the “nobility” of the poetic “lie” receives illustration.

Hamlet is a dramatic delineation in so far as he embodies a part of man's spiritual life, which is treated, for artistic purposes, as if it were the whole. The

tragedy of his career constitutes its truth—its reality. In an actual life there are two possible alternatives with respect to sin. Either the man must be unconscious of the evil that is in the world—in Hamlet's case an absurdity—or he must come to perceive that defect and misery are conditions of a progress towards their own annihilation. To both views present imperfection is the necessary corollary. But it attaches to Hamlet in a peculiar way. His life is imperfect, because he has passed the first stage without arriving at the divine discontent of the last. The tragedy is that he goes to his grave with this imperfection on his head. Here he is like all his kind. He suddenly solves his greatest doubt, and dies unwitting the result. It is from this point of view that he is not only a poetic but a true creation. He may be regarded as typifying the endless tragedy of the human spirit upon earth. Eternally striving to fathom the infinite, humanity is as eternally confronted with the evident fact of its unfathomability. "A man's reach" always exceeds even his most powerful grasp. An untraversed interval between the ideal and the realised is the distinguishing characteristic of self-consciousness; and self-consciousness is man's *differentia*—in its unfulfilled promise it alone separates him from other organic things which manifest their life and perish. Yet it is this very reason which plays him false, wrecking the splendid possibilities of his nature in woe unutterable. Hamlet does not so much fall a victim to mental weakness as to that insatiable yearning for the more really true which is at once the witness to man's supremacy and the cause of all his faltering. The conflict between finite and infinite, between present weakness and prospective strength, is fated to be re-

suttlessly fought out in Hamlet's soul. Convinced that it can never be ended on earth, and excluded from any comforting conception of its import, he dies, still bearing the burden of his dual nature. Despite most wistful reluctance, he slowly concludes that life is an enigma, and thus inevitably fails to read his own truest self.

III. Hamlet's Social Relations.

Shakespeare's skill in throwing the whole burden of the tragedy upon the central character is further exhibited in his consistent presentation of what may be called the loneliness of Hamlet. The Prince occupies a mental situation neither comprehensible nor attainable by his fellows. Hence in his selfhood he is alone. None can aid him, because none can find a way of entrance into his spirit. Disappointed with Ophelia, he strains Horatio to his heart as the one person capable of sympathising with him. Yet such is his nature that he sees the Ghost with other eyes and hears his horrid tale with other ears than even Horatio. The sins of the Danish Court appeal to him as they do not even to his best friend. This is skilfully intimated in the second scene of the third act. Here, when Horatio is equipped, as it were, to enter into sympathy with Hamlet, he displays a singular inability to do so. He has knowledge of the spectral visitant; he is acquainted with Hamlet's worst suspicions—nay, he has received a direct hint of the King's guilt. Yet he is apparently no more affected by these revelations than any other interested auditor might conceivably have been. He professes himself prepared, and assuredly is ready, to obey the commands of his royal friend. But of Hamlet's mental outlook, with

its disastrous width yet narrowness of view, he is profoundly ignorant. His reply, despite Hamlet's pathetic appeal, relates only to the outward task of watching Claudius. Sheer inability prevents the only fellow-creature who might have gone out into the infinite with Hamlet from mitigating the dread of his strange loneliness.

Ham. Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself ; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing ;
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks ; and blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—
There is a play to-night before the king ;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death.
I prithee, when thou seest that act a-foot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe mine uncle : if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note ;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face ;
And, after, we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.

Hor. Well, my lord ;
If he steal aught, the whilst this play is playing,
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft."¹

¹ Act iii. sc. 2, line 58.

Hamlet's relations with his fellow-actors are dominated by this his loneliness—his habitation of a sphere into which no one of them can make entrance. In a very true sense "he is all in order to be nothing." The "rivals of his watch" think he "waxes desperate with imagination" because he flies after the apparition. ✓ Polonius, in the profound stupidity of his self-conceit, is proud of having detected madness. The Queen finds conclusive proof of his insanity in his perception of a spiritual presence which escapes her grosser eye. Ophelia, lovelorn and simple, is unfit to treat his broad suggestions concerning life and destiny as aught but the offspring of a mind unhinged. Infinitely more than them all, he is yet as nothing in their estimation. For though some of them feel that he is above them, they cannot understand why. ✓ And this affords a clue to the truth that the character of Hamlet, like that of Faust, contains permanent elements, and is continually repeating itself on some wise in the world of daily toil. He is the man of reflective, but hesitating, mind. He appreciates the supremacy of spirit—

"What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more."¹

He has lowered the plummet deep down into the abyss of self-consciousness, and has realised the unfathomable duality of human nature. Yet, for all his knowledge, he has not experienced the accession of power which would enable him in a manner to go out and overcome opposing circumstances. Though understood, the factors in the struggle of life still remain at utter variance for him, and he is never able so to use them

¹ Act iv. sc. 4, line 34.

as to build up a final unity. "The peace which passeth understanding" is ever ideal, because the intellectual strength which could compel it into reality has not moral force to bridge the chasm between the possible and actual. The task laid upon Hamlet by Fate was the reconstruction of the ruined soul-world in which he moved. But so overcome was he of the present diremption, that he never could bend himself to the re-creation of his career—nay, the simple contemplation of his duty was nigh more than he could bear.

What, then, is this but the great, and characteristically human, conflict which every man, if he is to win ten talents more, must fight out here? Hamlet, up to a certain point, is a type. But he who would achieve perfection must overpass the Prince of Denmark. The struggle to which all men are heirs is in no sense hopeless. For in every one, as indeed in Hamlet himself, each act is motived from within. Circumstances may press upon man as they undoubtedly do upon the animals. But the former is capable of reading a meaning into them, which, for him, constitutes their ultimate significance. The more they circumscribe, the greater resource does the soul display in reacting upon them. It transforms them to its own uses, and in this very deed progresses along the path which cannot but lead to a state where conflict, with its fell brood of sin and misery, finds end for ever. Hamlet accounts life burdensome and strange, because he is intellectually acquainted with its difficulties, and is at the same time devoid of spiritual perception requisite to reading its ultimate moral import. Enduring hardness alike from men and things, he is disenchanted with existence, and disenchantment

remains for him the whole essence of living, except, indeed, during a few brief moments, the very interposition of which served but to accentuate the gloomier periods. So, according to common standards, he is ironical and peculiar. According to a more reflective interpretation, he is but a traveller on the road along which all who truly live must also pass. With half his journey done he is weary—wearied in that he sees neither its use nor end. This may be a specimen of that “deep and accurate science in mental philosophy” which Coleridge ascribed to Shakespeare. It were better to say that Hamlet is essentially the creation of one who possessed an intuition of the human heart adequate to even the most complex case. The humour of Jacques, the mirth of Falstaff, the helplessness of Lear, the passion of Othello, find fit equal, on an entirely different level, in Hamlet. The drawing of the last has all the firmness of the other delineations. Shakespeare’s revelation is here, as always, of what may be, of what—seeing that he has given it to us—already has been. In Hamlet he sets it forth that increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow; that the mysteriousness of life lies, not in its lack of meaning, but in the enigmatic conflict between small opportunity and high ideal, which, if truth be told, is the secret of the ceaseless onward movement of the ages, as well as the motive-force of the individual soul’s upward growth.

The exclusive attention so often accorded to what is termed Hamlet’s madness, has done much to obscure a full understanding of his character. The attitude of the ordinary mind—

“Why, then the world’s mine oyster
Which I with sword will open”—

is not that of the thinker. Reflection raises many difficulties which commonly are never noticed. One who is accustomed "to take things as he finds them," and to "make the best of them," has little patience, much less sympathy, with his neighbour who hesitates to act, delayed by definite but unseen difficulties. Hamlet, like many thoughtful men, finds the riddle of the universe hard to be solved. He can neither acquiesce in the *status quo*, nor satisfactorily account to others for his discontent. "To pretend madness is the secret of the wise." And Hamlet's understanding has its counterpart in the misunderstanding of his friends. To the courtiers he may seem mad; he may deliberately play the fool to Ophelia—as the most efficient means of impressing her. But for all this he is sane, as Claudius, sharpened perhaps by the instinct of self-preservation, very well knows.¹ We may indeed consider the predominance of thought over action, which characterises him, as tantamount to insanity. But in so doing we place ourselves on a level with those gushing triflers by whom

"the offender's scourge is weighed,
But never the offence,"

when an unusual occurrence arouses the public mind. Under such conditions it is needless to say that madness may be found anywhere. In earnest of his sanity, which so many have impugned, Hamlet always remains morally responsible for his deeds. Curiously enough, few, if any, of his critics have seen fit to deny this.²

¹ Cf. Act iii. sc. 1, lines 162 foll.; Act iv. sc. 3, lines 53 foll.

² I incline to agree with those who maintain that the mass of evidence for Hamlet's madness is derived from the "actor's point of view." Making allowance for the fearful shock caused by the dis-

No doubt one among his faculties was disproportionately developed at the expense of the others. It is so with all great men. In his own thought-world Hamlet was perfectly at home—that is, sane. His fellows, who could not enter into his feelings, who had had no such experience as that which tried him, might deem him mad. But this does not alter his nature one whit. If *Hamlet* a strongly marked individuality be the touchstone of insanity, then Hamlet was mad, very mad. But were this the accepted test, then all with more than average force of mind or will are in like case. And, as there is no lying where lying is universal, so there is only the insanity of the fool where the best are mad. For, as it has been admirably put, “there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in the philosophy of the small critic who thinks he has only to rule two columns, with ‘mad’ at the top of one and ‘sane’ at the top of the other, and then to put the name of Hamlet in one of the two.” Hamlet, like all real men, and especially men such as he, has a character made up of many elements, ramifying themselves in many directions, some being healthy and some diseased, and intertwined now in harmony, now in contradiction with each other.”¹ This view is further borne out by the clear development through which his character passes.

covery of his mother's guilt, and for the semi-hysterical states induced by the breaking with Ophelia, by the murder of Polonius, and by the madness and death of Ophelia, this contention seems to be true. Probably, for the lesser artist, there is more “fat” in representing lunacy. It is to be gratefully remembered, however, that our more recent impersonators of Hamlet, Mr Wilson Barrett and Mr Beerbohm Tree, do not enlist such adventitious aid. Hence their most truly artistic and immensely more subtle interpretations.

¹ Hamlet : a Moral Problem. Strachey, p. 63.

From the beginning onwards a gradual revelation is given of "that within which passes show." The special circumstances under which the Prince is presented at the outset sufficiently account for his distressful state. His father's death is the origin of his melancholy, and this is incalculably intensified by the moral shock due to the revelation of his mother's nature. The disillusion caused by the terrible shattering of his maternal ideal, the sudden perception of Gertrude's poverty of spirit and meagreness of understanding, coming coincidentally with his grief, constituted the starting-point from which Hamlet's second life set forth. The evolution of his disposition, as thus harshly deflected, furnishes the drama. The inner nature of the hero forms the central point round which, and in relation to which, the dramatist groups all the incidents. The movement of the play is skilfully designed to draw forth, with almost halting deliberation, Hamlet's internal career. By consequence, his character is gradually opened out, and the dominant elements in his being distinctly indicated. This evolution, which is not a degeneration, could take place only in a sound man. Hamlet is sane, but perplexed; virtuous, but undecided; passionate, but introspective; amiable, but sardonic. A being eager to lead an ideal life, he is held back from realisation of his noble desire, and is pitiously harassed by evils which he would fain avoid, but which he perceives no means of overcoming. Thus his inner harmony with self is jarred; the pressure of events continually confirms this disunion, and hardens it finally into a permanent moral imperfection. Hamlet's sensibility is so acute that, though stirred by the fateful apparition to execute revenge, he is ever deterred by an examination

of his own motives. His uncle's guilt is undoubted, and rouses his utmost resentment. His own part in the necessary retribution is also quite clear to him. But he could never persuade himself of the possession of the state of mind in which he ought to undertake vengeance. He was apparently incapable of convincing himself, for example, that he had utterly obliterated every tract of self-interest. This sensibility, with its pathetic search for the absolutely right, was the source of all Hamlet's woes. For it formed the channel through which the evil world surged in upon his high-strung nature. We pity him, and have no word of blame, because he was the subject of a contest so dire. The presence of sin obscured all good from him, and plunged him into the depths of despair. The disenchantment, involved from the first and thus slowly confirmed with but too great completeness, constitutes the tragedy of his soul-life. ✓ Where joy once had been sorrow entered; contempt took the place of affection; solicitude supplanted love; interest in the problem of existence, solely as affecting self, stood for actual living with its social opportunities alone suited to self-improvement. It was in some such way as this that Hamlet's attitude towards the world became, not that of a madman, but of a moral sceptic. ✓ He came to slip the magic thread of purpose, and so lost himself in the mazes of his own complex being. Thus he was more and more thrown back upon self. Casuistical analysis obscured the connection between motive and deed:—

"The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil : and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape ; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,

As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me : I'll have grounds
More relative than this."¹

No sooner is he resolved upon his great deed than intellectual motive-hunting intervenes. In his eagerness to be assured of the sufficiency of his justification, he misses his opportunity. Then, once more cast back all reproachful upon self, he feels with even greater keenness than before the inner power of his own conscience, which nevertheless has small strength to dispel outer sin. His unbounded aspiration is no sooner formulated than it is dissolved by an equally unbounded self-distrust. Hamlet cannot bring himself to believe that he is well enough equipped for his task. He is not mad, and even if melancholy, his melancholy is of the kind which only a powerful mind could experience. He is the standing enigma of modern literature, in the sense that he himself sets a question, himself holds the answer, yet dies leaving the riddle unsolved. Nowhere is this more forcibly brought out than in his relations with Ophelia.

Contemplation of the mysteriously sinful nature of the world had transformed his love into a terribly tragic solicitude. The key to his new attitude is to be found in those words :—

Ham. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me ; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock, but we shall relish of it ; I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy

¹ Act ii. sc. 2, line 580 ; cf. Act iii. sc. 3, line 73 foll.

dowry ; be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go ; farewell ; or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool ; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go ; and quickly too. Farewell.”¹

Hamlet, suspicious that Ophelia had been sent to play the spy upon him, may have thought to nonplus her by acting the idiot. His phrases are not those of a madman :—

“Ay, truly ; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness ; this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof.”

“What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth ! We are arrant knaves, all ; believe none of us.”

“God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another ; you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God’s creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance.”²

Hamlet is racked by the evils incident to life. And to him, we must remember, Denmark seemed dowered with far more than its fair share of iniquity. Misdeeds have occupied his soul, and so intent is he upon the deep heart-searchings thus excited, that he finds no place for his love in its old form. Yet even so, affection has not entirely fled. He would fain shield his once beloved from sin, from sorrow, from contamination in any shape. It is characteristic of Shakespeare’s artistic intuition that Hamlet advises the consolations of religion, not, as so many think, in a mood of cruel, even coarse, disparagement, but rather because, in his most pathetic devotion, he would preserve Ophelia not only unspotted from the world, would protect her not only from actual sin and misfortune, but would also keep

¹ Act iii. sc. 1, line 114.

² Ibid., lines 111, 127, 143.

her in innocent ignorance of that more terrible misery laid upon him by his intense consciousness of man's weak strength. The cloister life, full of unquestioning service, will save her as effectually from spiritual doubt and intellectual uncertainty as from material impurity and bodily defilement. His love is not gone, but, touched by thought, it has been strangely altered.

On the whole, Ophelia's was not a strong character, although she achieved something heroic in consenting to deceive Hamlet in order that his "lunacy" might be understood and cured. She was like many girls of gentle birth and breeding whom one might conceivably still meet. Tender, devoted, and of deep heart-wealth, she was yet unable to voice her love, or at least to give it distinct effect in conduct. A hidden treasure, it had need to be sought out, and this was not Hamlet's fashion. Naturally, Ophelia leant upon him; socially, she was compelled to do so; and, could he but have borne with this, he might have tasted the joy of experiencing the healing balm of a confiding feminine affection. But, such was his mood, that he chiefly craved a "better self," and this Ophelia would perchance have come to be had Hamlet's influence first transformed her. She was not the less, but the more, to be loved, as the average man would judge, because unable to effect this salvation. Hamlet sought sympathy from her; she had not the understanding to give it. Her supreme femininity is for him her final impossibility. Her filial obedience but confirms the Prince in his new opinion. He puts to her the question, "Where's your father?" "At home, my lord," is Ophelia's conscious but heroic fib in reply. Her lover appears to detect the deceit, and to conclude, not merely that Ophelia's love cannot

bear her up to his spiritual level, but even that she too has joined the general league of evil which is arraying itself against his righteous vengeance. At the grave of the hapless girl his old affection breaks forth once more with something of its former generous fire. The literally tremendous reply to Laertes has that ring of sincerity and mark of power which proceed from a soul, racked maybe, life-sick, and pardonably hysterical, but still well in all essential respects:—

“’Swounds, show me what thou’lt do :

Woul’t weep ? woul’t fight ? woul’t fast ? woul’t tear thyself ?

Woul’t drink up eisel ? eat a crocodile ?

I’ll do’t.—Dost thou come here to whine ?

To outface me with leaping in her grave ?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I ;

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw

Millions of acres on us ; till our ground,

Singeing his pate against the burning zone,

Make Ossa like a wart ! Nay, an thou’lt mouth,

I’ll rant as well as thou.”¹

To the Queen this may seem “mere madness.” It is the madness of that higher sanity which accompanies superb genius.

IV. Pessimism unconsciously overcome.

The form finally taken by Hamlet’s hesitation is distinctively ethical.² He is caught between the upper millstone of a duty which imposes an imperative “ought,” and the nether millstone of murder, a most heinous crime. Is it better to obey the call of duty, and do murder, or to disregard conscience and let

¹ Act v. sc. 1, line 264.

² Cf. Act iii. sc. 3, lines 73 foll., and Act iv. sc. 4, lines 32 foll.

successful sin flourish in high places? Hamlet's ideal—that which he would build into actual life for its reformation—was to prove the King's guilt, and then have stern justice done upon the criminal. Murder could but shift right from his own side to that of his victim. Notwithstanding, circumstances are such that he cannot bring the desired consummation to pass. The world arrays itself against him, and effectually hinders the morally ideal vengeance of which he was the designated instrument. To his uncle he *would* have meted out strict justice and a felon's death. He *could* not serve him with anything but assassination. Society might, and, according to Hamlet's notion, ought to, have visited the King with well-merited doom. He himself could only wrong him by illegally depriving him of life. Yet this, the worse plan, is rendered inevitable by mere stress of events. In this way evil rushes in upon Hamlet, working havoc with his whole being. He is a prey to the discord, most natural yet most distressing, between contemplated ideal and attainable reality. Nevertheless, he cannot be altogether overcome. His capacity for calm reflection still remains to him. To the gross world, as to Guildenstern, he could still say, "Though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me." Action may be inevitably baulked of manifestation in a perfect deed, but freedom to ruminate on all the best that might one day be is not thus affected. The difficulty in which Hamlet was placed by this antagonism none of his fellows com-
prehended. So the tragedy of his career gains intensity. But want of ability to sympathise—which the unsympathetic never seek in their own defect, nor perceive in their ludicrous judgment—is by its very

nature a whimsically insufficient account of the so-called madman. The hastily conceived deliverance is nothing but an opaque veil which hides away the truth. Hamlet's ideal—the unseen—remains his real strength, the essence of his nobility. His despair, because blameless vengeance cannot be executed, is his infirmity. The curious fact that strength and weakness alike originate in the same spiritual source, constitutes at once the riddle of his life and the cause of his tragic death. He has a blurred vision of some other state—attainable even now—where are neither sin nor sorrow. "O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space." But then he is checked by the irremovable reality, "Denmark is a prison," for "thinking makes it so." And at the last, still hesitating and troubled concerning the "cursed spite" of his mission, though his revenge be compassed, he straight hurries himself to another sphere, where doubt may be dispelled, and where the need to "report me and my cause aright" may have no existence.

Finally, despite all his darkling purpose, and his self-wrought death, Hamlet's vindication of the right is artistically complete. Claudius goes to his dread account as did his victim,

"Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled,"¹

"With all his crimes broad blown, as fresh as May."

Beyond what he even imagined,² Hamlet takes his uncle

"about some act

That has no relish of salvation in't,"

¹ Act i. sc. 5, line 77. Compare the whole passage.

² Cf. Act iii. sc. 4, lines 88 foll.

and in the midst so trips him that, of a surety,

“his heels may kick at heaven ;
And that his soul may be as damn'd, and black
As Hell, whereto it goes.”

Poetic justice this may be ; it is more. It is the fit solution of Hamlet's lifelong torment, the anodyne for his pain, the end of his dismay. In perfect sanity, his work well done, he meets death. His ideal righteousness has been actually realised in Denmark, although he wot not of it. His mind, sure of itself and of its own judgment, even amid the heaped-up horrors, dictates to Horatio all that is needed for self-justification ; and the Hamlet of the play passes into the unseen, carrying with him the unsearchable mystery of his double nature. Yet, though dead, he remains for ever in the perfection of his revenge, to tell that the wounds of life can be cured in living, that the battle with adverse circumstances is but a condition of advance to higher excellence, that, in his own peculiarly pregnant phrase,

“There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.”¹

¹ Act v. sc. 2, line 10.

THE PESSIMISTIC ELEMENT IN GOETHE.

I. Introductory.

EXCEPTIONALLY great men are, from the nature of the case, often unfortunate in their critics. Looming large upon the field of intellect and morals, they afford a tolerably attractive target—one easily hit, if not easily pierced. Yet, when the shot strikes, the damage is sometimes more apparent than real; the mark is scarcely affected. Genius, in other words, presents a liberal outline, but the value attaching to the various spaces within it is not determined by hard and fast law. Accordingly, many criticisms of Goethe, as of Browning and Tennyson, while not without aim, are liable to be discounted on close inspection. They reckon for less than had been thought at first sight. One has heard it reiterated to weariness, for example, that Goethe's plays are failures; "his situations are often dramatic, his characters are seldom so." The judgment is doubtless as obvious as that Dante and Balzac did not write comedies. Yet the stern seer of the 'Divina Commedia' and the lusty humourist of the

'Comédie Humaine' did not misname their works. Even a masterpiece of the "drama proper" may be dramatic in two senses. The oftener we see 'Hamlet' put upon the stage, the more convinced do we become that every representation furnishes only another commentary on the text. The play is altogether admirable for theatrical purposes, maybe, it is also beyond acting. This spiritual element, which escapes even the most consummate stage-craft, justifies the titles bestowed by Dante and Balzac; and in the same sense, too, despite the defects all too quickly detected by criticism, Goethe is a great dramatist. 'Tasso' is perhaps the limpest among those works which one must needs estimate, because its hero is not so much a man as a series of moods. Nevertheless, it cannot justly be divested of the higher dramatic interest. Again, the very magnitude of the issues at stake in 'Faust' inevitably renders the drama "a series of episodes," and causes Faust himself, not to mention Mephistopheles, to stand apart from those flesh-and-blood incidents which, in the main, serve to constitute the work-a-day world. The separation, however, has little more than appearance; for he who momentarily seems remote from my life is, just on this account, closely related to mankind.

Some considerations such as are thus suggested must lend justification to our present subject. Goethe, conventionally known as undramatic, is also conventionally called optimistic. In both cases the criticism embodies a half-truth only.

At bottom pessimism in its several forms is nothing more than the statement of the practical or moral difficulty which is formulated theoretically in that

somewhat amorphous body of doctrine known as agnosticism. When it has become philosophic, in the more limited acceptation of the term, it proposes to dismiss the problem by insisting upon the validity of a dogmatic solution. Some elements necessary to the setting of the question are eliminated, and all truth is referred to the remainder. Thought, curiously enough, as it increasingly apprehends the amazing complexity of the world-order, tends to become timid concerning its own position and credibility. Mind, particularly if regarded, as it frequently is, from the standpoint of isolated individuality, appears a very little thing. The mighty forces that surround it cannot, surely, permit much free play. True, it is a witness, *the* witness, to their operation, but only because it is part and parcel of their larger sweep. Of the ultimately real, of the last power which either pervades or determines the universe, this subtle selfhood, rigidly attached to a tiny brain, must plainly remain in ignorance. Knowledge can only be of effects, never of causes, for the organ of thought is itself one only among myriad results. When set over against the world, mind is powerless to answer any question respecting reality. Similarly, in the moral sphere, men, because they are impervious individuals, appear to be subject to limitations which, in the lapse of ages, ever press heavily and more heavily upon them, crushing aspiration and blasting in every direction those roseate hopes of self-satisfaction with which humanity has been wont to delude itself. Human nature cannot escape misery, sin, and death—evil in all kinds—any more than finite intellect can grasp truth or know reality. Therefore the universe must be a manifesta-

tion of the power of some devil, and this world the worst of all possible spheres.

“I heard a voice, ‘believe no more,’
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the godless deep.”

The modern poet cannot choose but face these spiritual issues. And Goethe, though with less consciousness than was characteristic of him in most cases of difficulty, did not avoid this one. Not indeed that he addressed himself specifically to it at any time; rather it furnishes a *leit-motiv* that recurs again and again with identical tone in varied themes, from its first clear suggestion in the sufferings of Werther till its final disappearance in Faust's apostrophe to the “fleeing moment.”

For our present purpose, then, we must turn to Goethe's work as a whole. In one aspect it presents a somewhat unusual problem. The prose writings, no less than the poems, possess peculiar significance. Both are organic to a certain view of life which gradually unfolds itself from period to period, not, however, simply undergoing change, but expanding. The poet's constancy to his own ideals was remarkable. After the return from the first Italian journey—sooner, some would say—he consistently clung to a definite conception of his mission. From this time forward he had “the shape's idea,” no doubt under many and widely differing forms. Nor was it his companion for an ecstatic moment, for a day or a year only—it mastered him thenceforward and always till the end. The slow growth of ‘Meister’ and of ‘Faust,’ the commentaries on the main thought afforded in ‘Die Natürliche

Tochter,' 'Die Wahlverwandtschaften,' and 'Das Märchen,' bear witness to wonderful persistence in a special kind of constructiveness. No doubt there is little of Shakespeare's unobserved inspiration, yet, on the other hand, Milton's conscious tending of his muse is conspicuously absent. Goethe plainly recognises his own self-reliance and its ground; he does not on this account strain himself while at work. In contemplation he goes far towards self-conscious philosophising, in realisation he commonly falls back upon the naïve perceptions of the artist. In an attempt to connect him with a prominent phase of that modern thought which he epitomised so wonderfully, this is an important point. For his intuition of the "plastic stress" that

"Sweeps thro' the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear,"

was exceptional. His *daimon* was not, like that of Socrates, an inner voice peculiar to himself, but an experience, subtle maybe and incommensurable, of unity with a mystic force "above all earthly control." This sub-conscious stream of tendency accounts for not a few of the puzzling difficulties that he presents. The Mothers and the Tripod, to mention familiar instances, are symbolic intimations of a pervasive energy that sways the poet yet eludes his analytic grasp. The revelation, if such it can be termed, is so incapable of intelligible characterisation that it at once recalls the professed world-principles which find privative expression only—Schopenhauer's *Blind Will* and Hartmann's *Unconscious*. The perplexing juxtaposition of symbolism and extreme devotion to nature, the impossibility of saying absolutely that Goethe was subjective or

objective, and the dialectic movement connecting these aspects, are due to the presence of this vaguely apprehended but ubiquitous essence. An antithesis runs through the greater works, and it may be said that the emphasis is now on the realistic, anon on the supernatural, now on things, again on self, always with the reservation that the one is conveyed concretely, while the other is generally clothed upon by a suggestion. Further, the poet's unrest, his desire for fresh experiences, and the mobility of his most plastic imagination, which permitted itself to be entirely possessed by sensuous impressions, fitted him to be a willing instrument of this uncomprehended motive-force. He felt himself one with nature, and the pulse of the mighty universe throbbed in his heart as truly as in the awakening life of spring. "The older I grow, the more surely I rely upon that law by which the rose and the lily blossom."

"Nature . . .

. . . makes each form by rules that never fail,
And 'tis not force, even on a mighty scale."

There can be little question that many of the coarse and ignorant criticisms passed upon Goethe have been occasioned by a misinterpretation of this his sinking of self in the ocean of the world-soul. But the evident satisfaction he derived from communion with the spirit of *Naturkraft* is so plainly the joy of the part exulting in the good it shares with the whole, that criticism is disarmed beforehand by a kind of benevolent eudæmonism. Further, although he repudiated the presence of external design in nature, he did not regard the world as the plaything of an irrational force. Nature for him is blind only in the sense that she does not apprehend

the end towards which she works; she realises she knows not what. But, although Goethe thus freely yields himself to an influence not wholly opposed to Schopenhauer's grim will, with its peremptory "die and be damned," he cannot be regarded as a vapouring mystic. The pessimistic element is a tendency in him, never a fixed or predominating quality. Indeed his activity might be taken as typically human, even granted the restrictions which "art for art's sake" sometimes imposed. Endeavour stamps his literary career. His optimism, so called, was no cheap product of a lazy habit of contentment. True, the struggle that finally wrought it out found theatre in the realm of thought rather than of character.

The tragedy, as it could not but be at the beginning of our century, had relation to knowledge more than to that moral diremption that has pressed so hard in recent years. Notwithstanding, Goethe did not simply acquiesce in a preconceived idea of the goodness of life, even although temperament and worldly circumstances conspired to smooth his path. If the sense of sin did not overwhelm him, he at least had comprehended, as few others, the disappointments to which man's ardent desire must here submit. Neither a philosopher nor a person of profound religious convictions, he occupied a middle place, and sought an imaginatively conceived solution of the moral riddle. While, therefore, under few delusions about the difficulty of living, and well aware of the issues raised by the duality of human nature, he gave himself to no jaundiced despair, nor pinned faith to any jaunty scheme of salvation. His lukewarm appreciation of Christianity may be—I think was—due to constitutional inability

to face pain. Goethe had never passed through the darkness that can be felt, whereout rises the stricken cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." But this valley of humiliation, though it be the blackest, is not the only dark place of the earth, and he had sojourned in other regions gloomy enough. The lack of this complete experience may have dwarfed his character as a man,—it enhanced, or perhaps we had better say, did nothing to detract from, his achievement as a poet. For, as every artist who is to be consummate needs must, he grappled with a problem whose whole difficulty did not appear. Thus, unalarmed, so to speak, he was able to survey it serenely before reducing it to the finite shape which best suited its expression. To preserve the balance here indicated is the main difficulty now before us. Goethe's optimism truly was won, but the victory received poetic expression mainly because his pessimism had not touched that depth wherein the overpowering sense of need for salvation begets self-regard so intense as to be necessarily incompatible with any limited or artistic representation of infinite interests. Self-detachment is, on the contrary, the mark of our poet's temper no less than the earnest of his ultimate success.

II. The Early Stage: Revolt.

The pessimistic element in Goethe assumed distinct phases at different stages in his career, and, although it is not altogether desirable to treat the subject by reference to strictly defined periods, a clear sequence must be noted. The youthful time of revolt, mainly negative, and consequently indefinite in its aspiration, saw little more than the setting of a problem. Then for a space,

at Weimar amid the whirl of court society, inner mis-giving was nigh stifled. In Italy, too, the poet was so continually externalising himself, not only in the mere acquisition of fresh ideas but in the composition of his specially litaresque works, that the higher moral issue bore no immediate interest. Changed circumstances, connected probably with his undoubted discontent on return to the Fatherland, and with the cool reception accorded to his new dramas, threw him back once more upon self. Careful study of natural phenomena led him to perceive the inner unity of the world, and, thus affected, he proceeded again to attack, almost *ab initio*, the obstinate uncertainties imbedded in 'Werther,' 'Prometheus,' and the first part of 'Faust.' By way of optics, botany, zoology, and the overmastering destiny of 'The Elective Affinities,' he arrived finally in 'Meister's Wanderjahre,' and especially in the second part of 'Faust,' at a positive, if poetical, reply to the life-question in which there always is a pessimistic admixture.

The intellectual environment of Germany in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, marked as it was by absence of national pride, and by a certain spiritual, not to say moral, poverty, largely determined the early direction of young Goethe's thought. The author of 'Candide' was no pessimist. Indeed, his doubting mood is but the other side of his omniscience. The very mockery which he levelled against human nature, the vials of wrath that he poured upon optimism, testified to his own clear, if somewhat narrow, perceptions. For the most part, however, his downright-ness, proclaiming that "the Supreme Intelligence which has formed us willed that there should be justice on

the earth, in order that we might be able to live on it a certain number of years," was void of effect. His oracular utterances had no inner touch of sympathy, and they passed overhead unheeded. Not so his scepticism. It exhausted the mental atmosphere, preparing men's minds, Goethe's like the rest, for the entry of a new order of beliefs. The later Mephistopheles is the Voltairean spirit embodied: the knowledge that good, bad, and indifferent are at the last—nothing. Emptied thus of positive creed, Goethe chanced upon Herder, came to hear of Rousseau, and fed on him throughout the *Sturm und Drang* period. Like the other sentimentalists, of whom Byron is the type, and to whom our own Burns may be affiliated, Goethe did not fly to the conclusion that this is the worst of all possible worlds. But after his own sufficiently bitter fashion, he wallowed in that slough of disappointment where Jean-Jacques wept floods of tears and Cain and Manfred cursed. Social conventions and the aims which the world *would* force ready made upon the solitary individual tortured his sensitive soul. How to be rid of them, how to find a smoother path, were difficulties that seethed within him. Götz, Werther, and Prometheus are the central figures whom the poet accompanies through a struggle wherein the moral schism is never brought within measurable distance of healing. So far, accordingly, it is a pessimistic stage, although one must note that the leading characteristic of pessimism, evaporation of ideals, is conspicuous by its absence. The kind of the ideals contemplated, however, precludes the possibility of a completed view of life. Götz is a hero because he strives to be loyal to his own higher judgment amid perplexities caused by the social and

political usages of the sixteenth century. The world oppresses him, but he stands forth to resist it even to death. Goethe in the first enthusiasm of youth thought he saw here the kind of leader whom his own country then required. Hence he endowed his creation with a powerful and generous spirit, so that Götz stands forth alone, the one completely dramatic character in the Goethe gallery. He lay too near the young poet's soul to be aught else. Yet, for all this, he fails, and, whatever our sympathies may be, the gloomy conclusion is the truer art. The mediæval knight of the iron hand felt, in all their keenness, the disappointments due to restraint. To have been set free from the restrictions incident to his age would, at the same time, only have permitted him further licence to oppose—to limit—others. The success of Götz' mission would have offered no anodyne to Goethe's moral unrest; for, even at the best, the straitening of personal aspiration had but been shifted from one man to his neighbours. In 'Werther' an identical issue is raised, but, thanks to the intervention of the egoism of Madame de Warens' lover, it finds more immediate application to the author himself. In 'Götz von Berlichingen' the very excellence of the dramatic representation tends to obscure the poet's spiritual state; in 'Werther' circumstances are altered, and here Goethe experiences the full force of that discontent which, half devilish in Voltaire, excessively human in Rousseau, was to become almost divine in his own 'Faust.' In 'Werther' he is still among the *Kraftmänner* or semi-professional mourners over the misery of living. Its pessimism is of the unreasoning sort,

“The nympholepsy of some fond despair,”

and not yet of Schopenhauer's inevitable kind. Reflective, it is nevertheless lyrical; self, not the universal order, is involved. "That the life of man is but a dream, has come into many a head; and with me, too, some feeling of that sort is ever at work. When I look upon the limits within which man's powers of action and inquiry are hemmed in; when I see that all effort issues simply in procuring supply for wants, which again have no object but continuing this poor existence of ours; and then, that all satisfaction on certain points of inquiry is but a dreaming resignation, while you paint, with many-coloured figures and gay prospects, the walls you sit imprisoned by,—all this, Wilhelm, makes me dumb. . . . I will confess to thee, for I know what thou wouldst say to me on this point, that those are happiest who, like children, live from one day to the other, carrying their dolls about with them, to dress and undress; gliding also, with the highest respect, before the drawer where mamma has locked the gingerbread; and, when they do get the wished-for morsel, devouring it with puffed-out cheeks, and crying, More!—these are the fortunate of the earth. . . . Happy is the man who can live in such wise! But he who, in his humility, observes where all this issues, also sees how feebly any small thriving citizen can trim his patch of garden into a Paradise, and with what unbroken heart even the unhappy crawls along under his burden, and all are alike ardent to see the light of this sun but one minute longer;—yes, he is silent; he, too, forms his world out of himself, and he, too, is happy because he is a man. And then, hemmed in as he is, he ever keeps in his heart the sweet feeling of freedom, and that this dungeon—can be left when he pleases." Again,

and to a like effect, he writes in 'Dichtung und Wahrheit': "It is told of one of our most distinguished men that he viewed with dissatisfaction the spring again growing green, and wished that, by way of change, it would for once be red. These are specially the symptoms of life-weariness, which not seldom issues in suicide, and, at this time, among men of meditative, secluded character, was more frequent than might be supposed." One can afford to smile at this kind of thing, knowing full well that "he will come out of it." At the moment, however, he does not. The futility of the cure prescribed at the close of the letter dated 30th August indicates that the disease has not as yet been diagnosed. "O Wilhelm! a lonely cell, sackcloth, and a girdle of thorns, were comfort compared with the repinings of my soul. Adieu! For miserable me there is no end but the grave!" Werther fails along with Götz, and for similar reasons, though more intense. He is as unstable as the knight was, in a manner, stable. His whole being wears the aspect of a kaleidoscopic display of sensations. Dwelling thus in the moment, he is never satisfied, and desire, unquenched by fleeting joys, demands further freedom. The revolt is not, as with Götz, against some clearly defined convention, it is rather that peculiar to the pre-revolution era; hence its greater importance and interest. Vague craving to escape from civilisation as a whole, intense longing to be done with restraint, liberty to commune with self in some refined internal realm, these are its marks. Indomitable in purpose, weakness is yet its privilege, for the purpose is no more than a negation. The solution of the moral problem possible to such a temperament

is illusory in an even deeper sense than it was before with Götz.

Rousseau might here speak for Werther. "I have never been fitted for civil society where all is *gêne*, obligation, and duty. My independent temper makes me incapable of the subjections necessary to him who would live with men."¹ And again: "For my own part, when I desired to learn, it was to know things myself, and not to teach others; I always believed that, before instructing others, it was proper to begin by knowing enough for one's self; and of all the studies that I have tried to follow in my life in the midst of men, there is hardly one that I should not have followed equally if I had been alone and shut up on a desert island for the rest of my days."² Accordingly, if the success of Götz had been but a shuffling of disappointment from one person to others, Werther's would have implied unfaithfulness to human nature itself. The difficulty of living is not fairly faced here, but an essentially impossible attempt is made to empty life of the constituents from which perplexity springs. Götz fails because crushed by an external order with which he will not league himself; Werther, more modern, falls to pieces of his own inner inanity. In his anxiety to outflank finitude, he strips himself of everything that could aid him, and, at the last, finding the world nowise kinder, and unconscious of the spendthrift prodigality with which he has impoverished his own spirit, makes an end of himself. Neither the life of action nor of thought serves to save from despair and defeat if certain terms remains unobserved. Götz could not but be condemned, Werther could not but

¹ *Rêveries*, vi.

² *Ibid.*, iii.

commit suicide. In both cases the difficulty of living proves victorious. The ideals sought are not of the kind that can be realised here; not only are they undesirable, they are also inverted. The equation of ethics as here stated contains a surd, and pessimism appears to triumph. But, as a matter of fact, the source of error has not yet been located. The dramatic power of the Play and the wonderful intuition of nature of the Romance are possessions for ever. Neither states the prime question of individual life in a manner which affords even a prospect of solution. Goethe used 'Götz' as the vehicle to express one kind of revolt, the mediæval; 'Werther'—hence its greater popularity—mirrored dissatisfaction as it was at the end of the eighteenth century. Both works were thus limited by special conditions, and therefore could not grasp the discontent which is inseparable from human nature as a whole. Yet even this Goethe accomplished, though in a semi-fragmentary way, about the same time.

'Prometheus,' if restricted, is not specialised after the same fashion as the productions of the first period just considered, and the inner disruption, so characteristic of self-conscious finitude, is boldly, yet briefly, stated. The awful depth of the spiritual gulf is plumbed, and although the hero perceives no means of bridging it, knowledge of its extent marks a distinct advance. Prometheus, somewhat after Goethe's own style, is a demi-god, recognising to the full his own dignity, and showing this appreciation in the same kind of spirit as Aristotle's ideal man. The egoism, so inseparable from pessimism, particularly in its modern phases, here finds vivid exemplification. The story

justifies it. For, after all has been said, the egoism of Prometheus bears its own defence, and so complete pessimism is escaped. The gods were silent, they seemed to take no heed of man and his wants; their power, whatever it might be, fell short of human interest. Hence Prometheus found himself forced to fall back upon his own productive force, and was sustained throughout his trial by the very modern perception—at the time peculiarly Goethe's—that his creative energy formed an integral part in that first principle of the universe to which gods, demi-gods, and men could not but equally owe allegiance. Prometheus, therefore, taking his stand upon selfhood, but not presuming, sets himself in opposition to the only other personality capable of thwarting him. The classical form adopted by Goethe limits the scope of the conflict, but it is the widest possible in a certain kind of civilisation. Prometheus is set over against Zeus. His enemy, although a god, is unable to do more than curb him, he cannot aid him to realise all that he feels himself capable of becoming. The external order of the sky-god directly collides with the internal order of a single spirit. So far as the ancient classical world was concerned, this constituted the cardinal opposition. The deeper agony of a fight with fate itself did not then come within the bounds of self-consciousness. For, as Homer makes Thetis say—

“What sorrows in my bosom reign, the terror and the woe !
Woe worth my luck in child-bed, and glorious birth I gave :
My son, among the fairest fair, above the bravest brave !
Upsprang he like a seedling, my glory and my joy !
I trained him like some garden plant ; and forth I sent my boy
High on the crested ships to sail, and wage the wars of Troy !

*But him again returning no more shall I receive
 Back to his father's home ;—but he, even while he yet doth live,
 And gaze on sky and sunlight, grieves now with bitter woe ;
 Nor would it aught avail to soothe his pain that I should go :
 Yet go I will.' . . .
 Then him still sorely groaning, approached his mother mild. . . .
 To her Achilles swift-foot impatiently replied. . . .
 . . . 'my fate will I embrace, when Jove that fate shall send ;
 Jove and the Powers Immortal : even Hercules the great,
 Dear though he was to Jove the king, he 'scaped not bitter fate ;
 But him the deathful doom destroy'd, and Juno's envious hate.
 And so will I too suffer, if such my *destined lot*,
 And lie in death, when death shall be.' ”¹*

Despite this Greek limitation, the struggle is really more acute than in 'Werther,'—at least the accidental, or merely contingent, element has been largely eliminated. The baffled fury of the lover will pass away, the aspiration of the demi-god must remain. In 'Prometheus' the temporary gives place to the permanent. Human nature, under one of its universal and necessary aspects, stands revealed. The Titan is no mere iconoclast, no puling sentimentalist crying for he knows not what. On the contrary, he is a creator ; but, as his relation to Athena shows, he is not simply a maker of men :—

“And thou art to my spirit
 What it is to itself.
 Even from the first
 Thy words have been celestial light to me.
 Ever, as if my soul spake unto itself,
 It opened wide,
 And harmonies, born at its birth,
 Rang forth, from out itself, within it,
 And a Divinity

¹ Iliad, xviii. 53-63, 70, 97, 115-121. (The translation is Merivale's.)

Spoke when I seemed to speak,
And when I thought Divinity did speak,
I spoke myself.
And so with thee and me,
So one, so intimate,
Endless my love to thee !”

Prometheus, like all who share the human spirit with him, is a creator of ideals. His self-consciousness, by its own inward determination, can project itself beyond the cramped boundaries of the material body and the finite world.

“No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change :
Thy pyramids built up with newer might,
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange ;
They are but dressings of a former sight.
Our dates are brief, and, therefore, we admire
What thou dost foist upon us that is old :
And rather make them born to our desire
Than think that we before have heard them told.
Thy registers and thee I both defy,
Not wondering at the present nor the past.”¹

But, in spite of this, these bodily vestments and earthly shapes truly are limitations. Be the ideals what they may—be they never so pure and beautiful and just—gross matter wars against them, the ruler of Olympus has sent forth his fiat, and they cannot be realised in their completeness. By withholding co-operation the gods thwart man. Yet, because he thus appeals to an inner conviction, Prometheus does not go under with Götz and Werther. Pessimistic he may be in his recognition of the world's cursed spite, this but enables him the more completely to comprehend the scope of the crisis. He cannot

¹ Sonnet cxiii. Shakespeare.

breathe the breath of life into his creations, nevertheless they *are his* creations, and he will not depart from them. The difficulty of realising ideals, the distressing obstacles upraised by things, the practical destitution to which aspiration seems inevitably doomed, all these weigh upon him and infuse a certain sadness into his being. So far he has sounded the depths of despair and is with the pessimists. At the same time, sustained, as all men may be, by a kind of indwelling divinity, he is able to bid despair defiance. From this state Goethe, in his early period, saw no deliverance, and 'Prometheus' remains a fragment sublime in the resistance of its hero, but imperfect, because resistance implies no effective deliverance from the ills that are. Zeus may successfully thwart another creator, but he cannot filch away his creative power, and the subject may defy the lord who can partly give and partly take away, but who is powerless to subdue.

"Here sit I and mould men
After mine own image,
A race to be like me,
To suffer and to weep,
To enjoy and to be glad,
And pay no heed to thee,
Like me."

Accordingly, there is no defeat in 'Prometheus,' as in 'Götz' and 'Werther'; far rather a distinct issue is presented, and the manner of statement is such that a reply is not rendered quite impossible from the first. The truth is that the presentation is still too symbolic. The need of a real man, in a sense, of a man of sorrows acquainted with our grief, has neither been fully felt nor sufficiently supplied. Until a truly human personality is brought into apparently hopeless conflict

with a deity who is greater than Zeus, the requirements of the solution of the problem cannot be appreciated. 'Prometheus' is therefore properly a fragment. Neither human enough nor divine enough, its personages do not embody the entire import of the question of questions with which humanity and every separate member of it must one day grapple if life is not to fail nor pass empty away.

We must remember, further, that the setting of this poem is not—indeed, could not be—purely Greek. Traces of Goethe's studies in Spinoza are evident throughout. The absolute necessity of the natural order, on the one side, and the presence of ultimate reality, or God, in the human spirit, on the other, bear witness, not only to the influence of the Jewish thinker, but also to a distinctive interpretation of his doctrines. For Goethe no more accepted Spinoza *simpliciter* than he appropriated anything without passing it through the transforming medium of his own mind. The power that sets the seal of necessity upon nature and rouses the sleeping divinity in man is no abstract substance, but some principle akin to that originating reason with which Goethe's philosophical contemporaries have familiarised us. So in 'Prometheus,' despite the Greek associations, the possibilities of a higher standpoint lie scattered. More definite expression is given them in those lines from 'Faust,' written about the same period:—

"The God who throned within my breast resides
Deep in my inmost soul can stir the springs ;
With sovereign sway *my energies he guides,*
But *hath no power to move external things.*"

Goethe's individualism appears here—his interest in the

particular, the specialised, the self-sufficient. But it is not unaccompanied by the thought, meantime crude and amorphous, that in a cosmos one part cannot say to another, "I have no need of thee." All are at least seen to be under the same condemnation, and thus a kind of connection is already constituted between them. Each is bidden heal himself, yet in the very process of introspection, which is the indispensable preliminary, the disease is found to be epidemic, and the plague of loneliness is not added to that of self-loathing. Thanks to the intervention of Spinoza, Goethe is put on the way of escape from the hopeless schism between the individual and the social consciousness of 'Götz,' from the aimless self-sufficiency of 'Werther,' and from the inexorable silence of an external, or perhaps we had better say, an indifferent, order that scorns man's call for succour of 'Prometheus.' Zeus was foredoomed to be dethroned by Spinoza, and the inner infinity, already revealed in the Titan, was destined, after much darkling struggle, to find a kindred deity ruling the universe. Prometheus, divested of his symbolic trappings and reduced to the less striking proportions of frail mortality, will at last suffuse the dull dark world with the light of hope by his confident appeal to the higher self. But ere this consummation can be attained, the poet has many a lesson to learn concerning the order of nature, in which necessity, born of an impersonal god, appears to hold supreme sway.

III. The Transition Stage : Investigation.

To the relation between Spinoza and Goethe much attention might be profitably devoted were the occa-

sion fitting, and it is so important for the present subject that it cannot be altogether omitted. Caro is correct in the main when he says that there are more differences than analogies between the philosopher and the poet.¹ Though a large influence in Goethe's mental development, the author of the 'Ethics' was not the master of a disciple. 'Götz' and 'Werther,' and from one point of view, 'Prometheus,' savour of Rousseau; 'Prometheus' from another side, and the works of Goethe's middle period, owe something to Spinoza. For, as the poet himself tells, writing of the philosopher: "His all-reconciling peace contrasted with my all-agitating endeavour; his intellectual method was the opposite counterpart of my poetic way of feeling and expressing myself; and even the inflexible regularity of his logical procedure, which might be considered ill-adapted to moral subjects, made me his most passionate scholar and his devoted adherent. Mind and heart, understanding and sense, were drawn together with an inevitable elective affinity, and this at the same time produced an intimate union between *individuals of the most different type.*" Spinoza's 'Ethics,' if not his system as such, imparted direction to Goethe's thought. The mere revolt against natural order of the earlier characters was replaced by attentive consideration presented under one aspect in 'Meister's Lehrjahre,' under others in the specially scientific studies, and in 'Die Wahlverwandtschaften,' to be latterly supplanted by the idea of co-operation, so eminently illustrated in the second part of 'Faust.' The collision between individual aspiration and social convention or external fact was removed from the

¹ Cf. 'La Philosophie de Goethe,' p. 188.

æsthetic or merely sentimental sphere by the advent of Spinoza, mainly because the foreignness of the world-order thereafter ceased to be its chief characteristic. Man's double nature,

“Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err,”

which had so smitten the poet and his age with its disease of inner warfare, found in Spinoza's ‘Ethics,’ not a cure assuredly, but a principle of explanation. For a time, then, Goethe emphasises the element of discord in life, principally by way of description and diagnosis, to the exclusion of that personal realisation of hopelessness so marked in the youthful period. Thus the hindrances to his presentation and solution of the moral enigma were not poetical or artistic only, they were due in part to a peculiar philosophy,—to a philosophy the business of which is, not “to solve the problem of the universe, but to find out wherein it consists.” Emotion, not conviction, is the prominent quality; there is an expansive intuition of order, but no clear recognition of reason without attuned to reason within. The beauty and exceeding sublimity of the world's ceaseless dynamic march are compensation sufficient to “the single life” for its relative and inevitable nothingness. This conception is artistically indicated in the marvellously pregnant verses entitled ‘Eins und Alles,’ and receives more direct expression in the brief essay ‘Natur,’ usually classed with the ‘Prose Aphorisms.’ To take the latter, which is more definite in statement than was Goethe's usual habit: “Nature! We are surrounded by her and locked in her grasp; powerless to leave her, and unable to come nearer her. Uninvited and unwarned she takes us up into the whirl of her dance, and hurries on with us till we are weary

and fall from her arms. . . . She has placed me in this world; she will also lead me out of it. I trust myself to her. She may do with me as she pleases." Thus, "renunciation once for all, in view of the Eternal," after the most approved methods of Schopenhauer and Hartmann, seems to be the logical conclusion. Some unknown and unknowable essence, like Absolute Substance, or Blind Will, or the Unconscious, breathes forth emanations in human form, and for the sake of this chimæra man must become humbly self-sacrificing.

In such a doctrine there is, indeed, just a tincture of truth, and this is at the root of the mysticism from which Goethe never escapes in his treatment of the problem of existence. The vagueness with which we grasp the "why" of Faust's deliverance, and the many obscurities incident to the later '*Wilhelm Meister*,' testify to Goethe's instinct for the half-truths of poetry, and to his sympathy with Spinozistic indefiniteness respecting the ultimate Power in the universe. But, on the other hand, Goethe, as the heir of later generations, transcends Spinoza. So far from giving himself over to quietism, he rather enjoins and practises a large, healthful activity. Life is stormy, he intimates in the '*Geheimnisse*' fragment, and affords no sphere for simple acquiescence. Man must struggle—

"For every power tends forward to the distance,
To live and to be working here and there;
And thereunto its obstinate resistance
The Stream of Time opposeth everywhere.
Amid this stormy, difficult existence
The spirit hears the oracles declare :—
That thrall the universal tyrant shapeth,
He that subdues himself alone escapeth."¹

¹ Twenty-fourth stanza.

All effort, be it artistic, scientific, or religious, which results in breaking the prison-house of self, is good. Throughout the rest of his career, Goethe emphasises now the semi-pantheistic tendency, again the duty of energetic living, and at last, in his completed world-poem, gives them a species of inner unity. In any case, the immediate result of Spinoza study is that he ceases to "whine, put finger i' the eye, and sob," and stands forth upon a higher plane. The comparative coldness with which 'Iphigenia,' 'Tasso,' and the rest were received, proved that the *Kraftmänner* and the *Hainbund* no longer counted him for their own. Henceforward his wavering, or pessimistic, mood was to be a different sort. Those critics who allege that the Italian journey did little or nothing to exorcise the Wertherian spirit, or that, disappointed by the reception accorded to the so-called classical poems, Goethe turned from literature in disgust, miss the line of development that his mind was inevitably taking. The inflow from without upon the single soul, as described in 'Meister's Lehrjahre,' revealed very little respecting the *kind* of the material thus received. So the study of science was unavoidably undertaken. This, in turn, led to the emergence of the idea of Fate, or, as it should rather be called, Chance, which was to become so prominent for a time. While, once more, further self-scrutiny, in the light of this very conception of Chance, resulted in an optimistic conclusion founded on a better understanding of the conflict forced upon mankind by external circumstances.

The first effect of devotion to Spinoza and science was to widen and deepen the pessimistic element in Goethe's work; not in the sense that ideals were cast down, but

the difficulty of the problem of life became more and more apparent. This was occasioned in natural course by the poet's changed standpoint. No doubt, he never abandoned the attitude that has gained him the name of "poet of the individual." But it is no longer the individual as such of whom he treats, the threads of each "man's destiny now become woven into the tissue of universal phenomena." The works composed under this new influence have often been termed "prurient," "debauched," and so on through the whole gamut of would-be injured innocence. They are susceptible of another interpretation, one which, perhaps, better consorts with a critic's own "mental chastity." Goethe's excursions into the field of physical science confirmed him more and more in the belief, first acquired in the department of history from Herder, that the world is a vast organic whole, of which man constitutes one portion only. Inspection of nature revealed the extraordinary network of relations that binds every phenomenon in its place, and endows it with the character it possesses. No single thing is aught in itself; indeed, were any one to be fully understood, the universe would have to be comprehended in its entirety as a preliminary. Each phenomenon is itself a point of unity, and forms one of a numberless series which, when linked, make the cosmos that we know. Obedient to certain laws, all fall into line, and none can by any means save itself from being caught up in the universal process. Such salvation, if possible, would spell destruction. Every object implicitly bears its own ideal—conformity to a type—within itself, and, except in submission to all-pervading law, self-realisation must be missed. But a mere natural phenomenon has no power

to detach itself from circumstances, and, accordingly, in so far as the collocation of necessary influences is complete, it conforms to its type. When conditions are unfavourable it becomes imperfect, not necessarily exceptional. This *Naturkraft* appears in the guise of a diffused impersonal force which energises in a predetermined manner, so that man, beast, and thing are alike fashioned by its irresistible power. So far the conclusion is baldly deterministic, and furnishes a basis for fatalism in the intellectual, and pessimism in the moral, order. To a certain extent the poet's temperament swayed him towards such a view. With exceptional impressionability, and of a passive rather than a creative imagination, he felt strongly, like Meister, the inrush of influences from the numerous sources by which the self is surrounded. Regarded thus, he may be said to have often experienced a species of dæmonic possession. But, as it so continually is with Goethe, this expresses only a partial truth. Bound by unalterable laws nature might well be; man, in the poet's own person, is never utterly helpless. "Goethe was one of those who are wavering because impressionable, but whose wavering is not weakness."¹ Swayed he might be, surrender he never did. The inexorable system of the universe, with its infinite dynamic force, often seems as if it would overwhelm the individual. This morally enervating thought, nevertheless, really contains the seed of its own destruction. The very rigidity of the world is man's opportunity, for he can here learn the lesson of his own infinity and its *conditions*. Goethe was saved from fatalistic despair by his power of self-detachment. He was able at one moment to present himself a living sac-

¹ Life and Works of Goethe, G. H. Lewes, p. 150.

rifice to the natural order; at the next, having thus caught some glimpse of the mystery, he was observing his own relations to the world, and forming resolutions for their rearrangement. By study of science he substituted for Zeus a deity with Spinozistic affinities, but endued, unlike the Absolute Substance, with the breath of life, if not of soul or reason. By self-examination he set Prometheus aside, and in his stead placed man, ready to cease bootless defiance and prepared to learn the terms of co-operation. This is the essential import of a certain much abused moral indifference. Goethe was Greek in his conception of the superiority of man, and clung most consistently to this ideal. The self-dependence which he so assiduously cultivated, at the expense of missing many both of the darker and sweeter experiences to which flesh is heir, proves this. On the other hand, his eagerness to witness the unbroken flow of that irresistible force, the undercurrent of the universe, illustrates the modern side of his mind, and this so strongly as to recall Schopenhauer's absolutely un-Greek admiration of the formless. But Goethe never surrendered himself to systematic fatalism in theory, any more than his most inconsequent fellow-citizen did in practice. The Greek superiority was still proof against the Song of the Parcæ even in its most terrible form, the non-mythological naked reality of scientific conclusions. Science and poetry are accordingly made to meet together, and the insight of the latter so lights up the tendencies of the former, that the rapidly thickening gloom of changeless sequence dissipates itself in the radiance of a developing order. Man, beginning to comprehend himself, renounces individuality, and thus in a manner magnetises circumstances so that they obey him.

Some such interpretation as this supplies a key to the social romances. To call them immoral, and so forth, is not to the point, just as it would be silly to declare that milk ought to be sold by the yard. They present a problem, or, rather, illustrate Goethe's notion of the solution of a problem with which his scientific and other inquiries had acquainted him. He had realised the extent of the purely physical process, and had arrived at certain convictions about its inevitableness. He possessed, at the same time, a tolerably conscious idea of his own sufficiency to self. The two required reconciliation, and the social romances are experiments in this direction, just as 'Götz,' and especially 'Werther,' were experiments on another and lower plane. The cruel indifference of natural law to man's hopes and fears might well lead him to cynicism or defiance, to pessimism or despair; how is he to free himself, to defy defiance, to doubt despair away? 'Die Natürliche Tochter,' 'Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre,' 'Die Wahlverwandtschaften,' and 'Faust,' taken together, afford a reply. In the earlier of these works there is a tendency to emphasise the element of Fate; in the later, baffling circumstances and man's reaction upon them receive equal illustration, and are finally brought to a species of unity. Within the present limits it may be possible to perceive this by brief reference to 'The Elective Affinities' and to 'Faust,' which stand somewhat in the same relation to Goethe's final stage as 'Werther' and 'Prometheus' to his earliest.

IV. The Final Stage: Reconstruction.

‘Die Wahlverwandtschaften’ is a representation, perhaps the classical one, of that social phase of which Caroline Schlegel was the typical personal embodiment. It has been said of the work that “the poet will by it once again, as in ‘Werther,’ expose a disease of the time. But it is alive because the poet had himself surrendered to the prevalent disease, and had not yet risen out of it into a clear atmosphere.” This judgment, as so often happens with reference to Goethe, is partly true, partly false. In its ascription of life to the romance, and in its allegation that the author had not yet reached certainty, I believe it to be just. On the contrary, as I have tried to show above by implication, it must be held false in its contention that the poet had parted with his personal freedom. The novel, like ‘Werther,’ has a *souppçon* of reminiscence about it, and partakes of the character of an experimental commentary. Here, however, the latter predominates greatly over the former, hence the comparative contrast to the earlier tale. It is a study in the submergence of wayward individuality by destiny. Prominence is accorded throughout to the pessimistic element—the victory of irrevocable law over human aspiration, the utter impossibility of success in the realisation of ideals. The title strikes the key-note. The categories applied are those of chemistry, persons being likened to elements which, by the inner principle of their being, fly to their affinities even to their own destruction. Edward and Charlotte, as we first meet them, seem to be ideally situated with respect to most

of those surroundings which assist in the maintenance of the family relation.

“Prosperity’s the very bond of love,
Whose fresh complexion and whose heart together
Affliction alters.”

Yet, for all this, Edward’s failure to comprehend his essential responsibilities is sufficient to break up an outward estate, be it never so securely based. The restrictions of common prudence are very considerable, but, as a material element, the hero is fated, and gives himself over to his destiny. The presence of this unseen and appalling determination is further heightened by Charlotte’s intuition of coming ill, that opposes itself to the pleading of her early lover, and in the magnetic, or unconsciously attractive, character with which Otilie is endowed. Moreover, the chemical analogy is closely worked out, particularly in Edward’s case. He is a compound; free in himself, he is yet limited by the marriage tie. The freedom, which is fate, displays itself whenever Otilie comes within range, and, by his own act, he aids the purpose of the Destiny that cannot but destroy him. Hence the overmastering and terribly gloomy feeling which pervades the story. The hero, if such he can be called, blunders to his ordained doom, as it were, Fate looking on the while with impassive irony. His *choice*, to go to the wars, is a deliberate invitation to Chance to work out salvation on his behalf, and he is not disappointed. Preserved to return in great glory, he interprets this as a permit from his blind deity to unite himself with his affinity. But Fate is not yet done with him, and, for reasons that he cannot fathom, any more than he has ever fathomed aught, Otilie

is torn from him; and he, too, self-sundered by his attraction, and rendered useless by her death, is ground to pieces between the upper millstone of his own obstinacy and the nether one of the order to which he has opposed himself.

The work is most carefully planned, and in its every part is calculated to lend effect to the combination of folly, destiny, and disaster that constitutes its climax. It is a delineation of self-assertion having a far larger sweep and much deeper relations than 'Werther.' But, like the early work, the failure in which it culminates has subtle spiritual causes. To this point pessimism prevails. Ideals, in other words, instead of moving the universe, are overborne by it, and so belief in a moral order tends to become feeble, even although it does not entirely disappear. Yet, in contrast to the ignorance of the sentimental stage, Goethe here plainly knows what the chief reasons for Edward's defeat are, and is, therefore, so far on the road to optimism that he sees how man may, by his own fault, hand himself over a victim to nature's stern dispensation. He reads this nature, too, in a wider sense, making it include social relations. He is perfectly aware that men are not chemical elements, and that, when they act as if they were, they condescend to a lower sphere, and must take the consequences. Human endeavour, as he tries to illustrate, cannot, if true to itself, become the plaything of Chance. Self-determination is its vocation, society affords it opportunity in moralising institutions. Thus, self-assertion, like Edward's, being no more than a species of contempt for opportunity, stultifies self-realisation. The predominance of destiny, and the pessimistic conclusion, are accordingly to be regarded, not as final, but only

as intimations that the liberation of the individual cannot be accomplished in this way. Schooled by Spinoza and by science in the merits of "uniting with the many," Goethe, in fact, condemns, perhaps out of the fulness of personal experience, an attempted union with one in despite of the many.

'Faust' at once sums up and supplements all that had preceded. The temporary pessimism, especially of the first part, is even deeper than that of 'The Elective Affinities,' for it is experienced by a person, not by a mere general term. Its struggle is severer than that of 'Werther' or of 'Wilhelm Meister,' for neither a youngling nor an immature character is presented, but a man of formed and independent ideas, strong to battle for his own opinions. Its promise of a solution in some kind is brighter than that of 'Prometheus,' for a descent has been made from the mythological to the modern, from the equivocal circumstances of the demigod to the unmistakable difficulties of the man. The thought which pervades this, Goethe's lifelong work, is that of the soul isolated at first, and of its self-wrought salvation, achieved at length by abandonment of selfishness. The poem is a series of incidents strictly subordinated to the main theme, which is nothing less than the transformation of particular ideals by reflection on the results which accompany the heedless assertion of personal wilfulness. The question to be answered is that of "the right moment" at which to "unite with the many." The hero is at the same time a person—hence our interest in him; a type—hence his rapid transitions; and an allegorical embodiment of the struggles of humanity as recorded in the history of the race—hence his puzzling immensity.

In the first a large pessimistic element is present; the individual is necessarily self-seeking, and, accordingly, is doomed to failure. In the second, too, pessimism has a place; man passes once and again through the valley of the shadow. In the third pessimism at length finds its proper office as an indispensable portion of a greater unity: the organic relations of humanity, regarded as a whole, afford proof that the judgment of the world is also its justification; for the only ideals capable of even partial realisation are found to be those which subserve, not simply the aggrandisement of self, but also the advancement of the progressive principle that at once originates and forms the true destination of all personal attainment. There is a conflict within the hero himself which for the time being entails defeat; it is succeeded by a larger collision between the single man and the social shapes that surround him: this also results disastrously. As a consequence, the necessity for bringing himself into line with his fellows dawns upon the egoist, and the necessity itself finally disappears in the freedom of characteristic vocation.

For a long time, nay, until we well nigh despair, Tragedy seems to have marked Faust for her own. Yet, not despite, but by the very fact of, his double being, which he shares with all his kind, he indicates the subtle comedy in which he has borne so great a part. As the theme demands, the treatment is subjective—in the first part entirely, in the second to a considerable extent. True, a clear-cut personality occupies us, but “the play’s the thing” in respect of inner nature alone. Man, be he who he may, brings the struggle of life to birth himself. Evil, whatever

be its ultimate meaning, is in any case an accompaniment of his life. For, as the Lord says—

“Man’s active nature, flagging, seeks too soon the level;
Unqualified repose he learns to crave;
Whence, willingly, the comrade him I gave,
Who works, excites, and must create, as Devil.”

For all the mediæval lore, the classical episodes, and symbolic incidents too, the method is thoroughly modern, it may be termed genetic. An attempt, conscious in so far as artistic intuition permits, is clearly put forth to refer all the events, all the changes, all the most varied thoughts, to one universal principle, for which they were created, and to the manifestation of which they tend. Be the occurrences never so bewildering in character, be their diversity almost absolute, the same idea pervades them, so, when unified, they may be regarded as designed to supply the poet’s answer to his own universal problem. “Who calls the *individual* to its *universal* consecration, where it strikes in glorious concords?” If, then, this interpretation be true, the presence of a pessimistic element is inevitable. The individual and the universal need to be brought together, and, ere this consummation, the black darkness of moral uncertainty must cover the earth. Ideals cannot but be doubted, cannot but be inverted, in order that they may at last receive consecration as the only goods worth having or getting in this world.

Self looms so large in common life that the aspiration with which it must characteristically be fraught issues in selfishness. To extend individuality becomes the chief aim. On all sides the physical body and men and things oppose a stubborn and, in the main, success-

ful resistance. The self-seeker is thrust back disappointed into his own little circle. The greater the energy spent upon externalising self, the more complete the collapse, till, sometimes, suggestions of self-destruction cannot be stilled. Disruption in the inner sphere, if crystallised by enforced or voluntary isolation, precipitates pessimism. And this is the first state in which Faust appears. Through many years he has denied himself all that the majority account bliss, and has taken learning for his sole mistress. But the progress of his thought has done no more than reveal its own futility and the complete illusoriness of its search. Intellect cannot arrive at truth; magic can but call up the formless; death is not yet, nor is it the end—the Easter bells are pealing. Let aspiration itself be accursed, let the momentary satisfaction of sense suffice. Baulked of truth, helpless to realise the divinity within, convinced too of the relentlessly chaotic character of the force that sweeps through the universe swallowing up every individuality, man cannot do better than sell his soul to the Devil. The Evil One *has* the earth for his kingdom, and can in any case afford the only satisfactions possible here. The future, cancelled meantime by the negative conclusions of thought, may safely be left to take care of itself. Faust, spurned by the Earth Spirit—the *Naturkraft* of Goethe's scientific studies—cannot but enter into league with Mephistopheles. On knowledge denying itself this very modern devil appears, and, in an inverted world, strives to satisfy self-stultifying aspiration. The pessimistic element is so overwhelming that man, its author, presents it with a selfhood as distinct as his own, and proceeds to bargain with the strange comrade. The immensity of the

blunder is cause at once of deepest tragedy and of broadest humour. The gift of personality and of a power of initiation to Mephistopheles, the spirit who would destroy the medium in which alone ideals can be realised, is in the sternest sense tragic. Yet this demon is a creation, and, as such, is bound to his creator, whom he must aid to his own despite. The unconscious irony of Faust, when he enforces his behests on Mephistopheles, partakes of that high humour which informs only the greatest dramas.

Goethe, therefore, leaves an easy way of escape from the pessimism, now so dear to many, in the insidious shape of cynicism, which concludes that "every created being is worthy of ruin, hence it were better if nothing were created." Mephistopheles cannot stand to his bargain. He may give and give and give again of sensual delights, satisfaction will certainly be as far off as at the beginning. And when, at the close of the First Part, he is found co-operating in a work rendered holy by Faust's self-reproach, the direction in which the man's way of deliverance lies ceases to be doubtful. The modern devil, he of pessimism, is so constituted that he cannot but outwit himself. What he had accomplished for damnation is already so far undone at Margaret's death that he is actually enlisted in the service of an ideal. All that this implies, it is the office of the Second Part to show. Here the pessimistic element gradually disappears, and is at no time revived with its former intensity. The lavish symbolism employed doubtless indicates that much still remains unfathomable, yet a particular revelation of the import of this universe is pictorially conveyed. The rush to possess himself of

Helen, and the death of Philemon, are Faust's last concessions to the spirit incarnate in Mephistopheles. Schooled by hard experience, his career is thenceforward concentric to a new ideal, and he annuls his bargain with evil by negating evil itself. The good overflows all when the conditions of self-realisation are understood, and aspiration finds fit expression.

“Zum Augenblicke dürft'ich sagen,
Verweile doch, du bist so schön!”

Man has here overcome pessimism by the perception that, for him, time and eternity are one. A principle which, so far as we can now see, finds no full realisation has been set in operation, and holds in itself the promise and potency of a future perfection consequent upon present devotion to duty.

“The greatest men,” Goethe makes Ottilie say, “are always connected with their age by some one weakness.” The maxim can be applied to himself with unusual aptness. His implicit reply to pessimism faces two ways. It inculcates resignation, coupled with an activity which consists in devotion to the most stable ideals. Something of the inwardness of the Reformation has penetrated him, he is also permeated with the naturalism of the Renascence. The two influences, which beget the two constituents of the answer, form a working partnership in his mind, they are hardly brought together in an organic unity. Eclecticism, praiseworthy in its comparative freedom from prejudice, characterises the poet's attitude.

“I cannot rest from travel : I will drink
Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those

That loved me, and alone. . . .

I am become a name ;
 For always roaming with a hungry heart,
 Much have I seen and known ; cities of men
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,
 Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ; . . .
 I am a part of all that I have met ;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
 For ever and for ever when I move."

It is not sufficient to say that Goethe's deliverance from pessimism was poetic or imaginative, rather than philosophic or rational. A definite and restricted body of opinion prompted his imagination whither to look in moments of insight. Accordingly, the vision perceived is itself peculiar. Mystic trappings incident to a by-gone conception of deity obscure the manner of Faust's deliverance. And necessarily so. For Goethe, who was a stranger to deep sense of sin, could not apprehend the mediatory power of a God able to save. Divine presence in the world he admitted, divine love he partially knew, but divine justification, setting its seal to the essential goodness of this earth as dwelling-place for a being constituted like man, he failed to appreciate. Here lies the weakness in which he is linked to his age. Yet, perhaps for this reason, he has done more than any other modern writer to show what an adequate conception of deity involves for mankind on account of the problems and difficulties by which life is so crossed.

"Dear is the Minstrel, even to hearts of prose ;
 But he who sets all aspiration free,
 Is dearer to humanity.
 Still through our age the shadowy Leader goes ;

Still whispers cheer, or waves his warning sign,—
The man who, most of men,
Heeded the parable from lips divine,
And made one talent ten !”¹

V. Conclusion.

What has already been said depends partly on the assumption, which hardly needs defence, that poetry and philosophy stand in substantial unity with each other; and partly on the view that in his conscious debt to Plato and Spinoza, in his no less conscious antagonism to, or rather dread of, contemporary thinkers, of Fichte and Hegel, and, more than either, in his unconscious fusion of Greek with mediæval ideals according to the modern spirit, Goethe may be taken as the type of writers who wed ultimate truth to exquisite shapes. It would be superfluous dogmatism to assert that this second position is universally accepted. In effect, the question has often been put, Is Goethe a fair example to select for illustration of this point? and a negative reply has not infrequently been returned. With evident purpose, and perhaps in a semi-national spirit, a French critic² has declared that “Goethe is a poet full of ideas and of observation, full of sense and taste, full even of feeling no less than of acumen, and all this united with an incomparable gift of versification. But Goethe had no artlessness, no fire, no invention; he is wanting in the dramatic fibre, and cannot create. Reflection in Goethe has been too much for emotion, the *savant* in him for poetry, the philosophy of art for the artist.” The Celt,

¹ Lines on Goethe. Bayard Taylor.

² E. Scherer.

prone to feeling, thinks that the Teuton, prone to reflection, has permitted the cold impersonality of abstract thinking to chill the passion of poetry at its very springs. In other words, so far from being taken as the typical mediator between poetry and philosophy, Goethe ought rather to be regarded as a warning. Had he been a worse thinker he would have become a better poet. And for many the spirit of Matthew Arnold's lines will rise in support of a similar contention:—

“When Goethe's death was told, we said :
 Sunk, then, is Europe's *sagest head*.
 Physician of the iron age,
 Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
 He took the suffering human race,
 He read each wound, each weakness clear ;
 And struck his finger on the place,
 And said ; *thou ailest here, and here !*
 He look'd on Europe's dying hour
 Of fitful dream and feverish power ;
 His eye plunged down the weltering strife,
 The turmoil of expiring life—
 He said ; *the end is everywhere,*
Art still has truth, take refuge there !
 And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below
 His feet to see the lurid flow
 Of terror, and insane distress,
 And headlong fate, be happiness.”

The opinion which seeks to make Goethe's example serve as an argument for the separation between poetry and philosophy largely depends upon freedom of selection from his works. Indeed, it might fairly be held to prejudge itself by declining to adopt his writings as a whole. Even if the propriety of selection be admitted, a case is furnished with almost exclusive

reference to the poet's later years. 'Die Natürliche Tochter,' the second part of 'Faust,' and portions of the 'Westöstlicher Divan' illustrate the victory of the symbolising over the spontaneous spirit. Even here many would hesitate to admit the last as legitimate evidence. For there are things in the 'Westöstlicher Divan' that stand comparison not only with, say, the 'Roman Elegies,' but even with the early outbursts, of which 'Mahomet's Gesang' is a leading instance. Accordingly, when one frankly admits that there is much in Goethe's later phase that gives countenance to the French or critical view, enough has been allowed. Undoubtedly the attitude characteristic of didactic prose, of 'Wilhelm Meister' and the 'Conversations with Eckermann,' is appropriate more to the philosopher than to the *littérateur*. But, apart altogether from a tendency to increased reflection, which even the greatest poets—Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Goethe, Browning—evinced in declining years; apart, too, from the questionable justice of holding this period representative, it may be shown that Scherer's contention rests ultimately upon a misconception of the relation in which Goethe stood to his materials.

"Goethe's Hellenism" is a phrase that covers more than appears on the surface. For many it indicates nothing but the poet's conscious antagonism to distinctive traits of the era in which he lived. While for others, a smaller class, of whom Scherer was one, it is an intimation that Goethe carefully tended his muse, so as to restore through her a species of artificial respiration to dead things. Both interpretations are unjust, though the latter is far the more insidious. Taking the poet's work as a whole, evading no responsibility by convenient

selection, "Hellenism" is a warrantable term only by virtue of an extension that entirely removes its sting as a criticism. It is applicable if it be held to cover, not simply a devotion to the special ideals of classic Greece, but also a living appreciation of poetic materials drawn from Rome and Mecca and the further East, as well as from the mysticism of Plato and Spinoza. Nay, more, it must be taken to include the reinterpretation of all in a Goethean manner—that is, with a freedom so transmuting content that no Greek or Roman, no Arabian prophet or Persian poet or semi-Jewish philosopher, would readily comprehend the result. Not Goethe's work, then, but the character and extent of what may be called his educational possessions, might engender the supposition that in him the deep thinker overcame the free artist. His culture and knowledge alone afford a wide enough basis for so large a conclusion. Their scope also tempts to the further deduction that the remnants culled from past ages remained ever foreign to the poet. This, on the contrary, is so far from the truth that he might well be taken as the most eminent example of the proverb, He touched nothing which he did not ornament. All that he gathers from Greek and Oriental civilisation he fuses again with modern ideas. His Prometheus would hardly impress Sophocles as heroic, the Greek would rather perceive a person of somewhat foolish impiety. The immanent principle in nature, apostrophised by Ganymed, had not been revealed to the Athenian citizen on this wise. No; Goethe, like the greater Shakespeare, so overcomes his material, irrespective of its sources, that a new creation springs forth. And this transmutation was the work of ideas peculiar to his age—of widespread

intuitions to which he first gave distinct speech. Although he deemed himself a pagan, and considered Christianity hardly the religion for him, he was not antagonistic to his epoch. By the simple fact that he could so detach himself from merely acquired knowledge as to reproduce its elements on an original plan, he articulated many fresh ideas drawn from the central life of the time whose representative he must ever remain. Little as he may have perceived it, his age flowed through him, and little as some of his critics appear to note, this passage itself destroyed at a stroke the seeming externality of the historic incidents and ideals from which he often set out. If such be the desire, much that men call spiritual information can be gleaned from his work. The first part of 'Faust' implies an entire philosophy, but so too does "Hamlet." And Goethe is no more to be blamed for this than Shakespeare. Both reveal what they have known in their own souls. No dispraise to them, then, that we find deep import in their words; admiration and wonderment rather that with such art so much matter should have been so perfectly allied. Unconsciously, and therefore artistically, Goethe passed Hellenism through the medium of mediæval mysticism, reducing the supernaturalism of the monk by the naturalism of the botanist, negating the saint's other-worldliness by the dramatist's supreme interest in man. But all this, and much else, found best accomplishment in what was artistically finest. Through poetry, more perhaps than through the sister arts, philosophy in this very way receives voice. After the worst has been said of him, Goethe, by keeping within the truly poetic sphere, proves that literature and philosophy must overlap.

The great drama achieves the highest level, because in the limited framework of an artistic whole it encloses the spiritual evolution of an age, perhaps of a civilisation, for which the philosopher must lay it to his account ere long to find meaning, if not to discover in it some evidence eminently relevant to the proof of his system.

BERKELEY, KANT, AND SCHOPENHAUER.

I. Introductory.

IN philosophy, as in other departments of human effort, history sometimes evinces a tendency to repeat itself. Not that the same principle or doctrine reappears marked through and through by identical qualities. Rather, analogies can be traced, and, if fairly interpreted, if coaxed and not forced, much may be learned by reading single notions or even entire systems of to-day in the light cast back by their cognate predecessors.

It can hardly be alleged, for example, that the mediæval controversy over "universals" has yet been laid for ever. The old argument still goes on. New illustrations, newer interests, accompany it, and perhaps tend to obscure its erstwhile meaning, or, at least, to differentiate it widely from the more technical problems to which William of Champaux, Roscellinus, and Abélard devoted their lives. Nevertheless, taken broadly, Realism and Nominalism have been fighting out the ancient battle over nearly the whole field of modern

speculation. The semi-mystical Malebranche and the "god-intoxicated" Spinoza stand in vivid contrast to the sober, and almost austere, masters of British thought; and even now we are taught to believe, on the one hand, that "an *atom* is better than a category," on the other, that "subject and object are the *manifestation* of a third term, which is higher than either." Little wonder, then, that, in common with most modern thinkers, Schopenhauer possessed distinct predilections regarding first principles. These are to some extent capable of elucidation from the historical side, and inquiry of this nature may serve to illuminate, possibly to throw in shadow, the general basis of his system. Although the movement of thought as a whole might thus legitimately come under review, Schopenhauer affiliates himself so much more to Berkeley and Kant than to others of his forerunners, that it is necessary to treat them as central figures round whom the varied questions involved circle naturally.

When Europe, freed from feudal and ecclesiastical shackles, awoke to freedom of thought, two departments of investigation occupied the attention of thinkers. The physical world, with its manifest wealth of interest, attracted many. Even the professed mental philosophers were at this time men of high scientific attainment. But, in addition to the unsearched regions of nature, the problem of knowledge claimed its students. Now, as never before in the Christian era, those who desired to solve the timeless difficulties of intellect and morals found themselves at liberty to exercise judgment fearlessly. The individualism of the Reformation repeated itself in the rational independence of Descartes and Spinoza. Untrammelled by traditional

presuppositions, men began to discuss afresh the origin, limits, and credibility of knowledge. On the one hand, from Descartes to Leibniz, on the other, from Bacon to Hume, the history of modern philosophy is a long record of effort to reach the ultimate elements of knowledge. The theories constructed to this end divide themselves naturally into two main groups. The names of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz represent the one, those of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume the other. All, as it so happened, gradually prepared the way for the adoption of a new standpoint, and for this last philosophy was indebted to Kant. Despite their endless doctrinal differences, pre-Kantian thinkers were agreed that human faculty, unaided by other powers, *could* arrive at true knowledge. The chief matters of philosophical investigation — God, freedom, and immortality — were guaranteed, not by a confession of faith vouched for by authority, but by the exercise of reason. Thought, in short, was held adequate to the presentation of truth. This assumption is common to the pre-critical systems. On examination, however, it is found that reason, as it issues in knowledge, has derived information from more than one source. Knowledge may be obtained not only through thought itself, but from experience through the medium of the senses. Thus, while all thinkers were at one in accepting the reliability of knowledge, they tended to explain its existence sometimes by reference to its thought-source, at others by pointing to sense impressions. This divergence occasioned the separation of modern pre-Kantian systems into two principal classes. These may be conveniently named the Cartesian—according to which certain *a priori* ideas supply the criterion of certainty, and the Lockian—which refer

truth to the senses for legitimate confirmation. The former have been termed rationalistic, the latter, empiricist. Each group after its own special manner came to render the Kantian philosophy necessary.

Descartes took the thinking subject to be the ultimate and self-evidencing thing in the universe. From it proceeded "the natural light" which illuminated his rationalism. "I think, therefore I am"; than this nothing can be more certain, and, accordingly, on this basis a system may — nay, must — be raised. The "thinking thing" is the presupposition of the Cartesian universe. Nor is this all. On closer inspection this self is discovered to be in possession of a complete natural equipment. It brings with it a stock of possibilities, known as innate ideas, which are as securely guaranteed as its own existence. Thus man, the thinking substance, is not only satisfied of the absolute reality of his own selfhood, he is equally assured of the trustworthiness of innate ideas. Among these the conception of God is the most important. He, as the absolute substance, is the sole conceivable cause of the idea of himself; therefore he exists. And, from his very nature, he cannot but warrant the correctness of the knowledge which man has of an extended substance external to himself. This, then, is what Descartes evolves from his assumption of the ego's irrefragableness. Given the self, there immediately emerges the idea of the absolute substance on which it depends. This, again, is the ground of the extended substance, which the thinker recognises in the outer world. These three elements form the framework of knowledge and reality. Three substances, set side by side, constitute the entire world. Do they fur-

nish a sufficient, or self-consistent, explanation of it? If "they exclude each other," as Descartes alleges, can they so co-operate as to produce the intelligible totality of thought and things. Surely not. The fact is that Descartes proceeded by a leap from the vantage-ground of self to deity, and thence to extended substance. There is neither natural nor logical connection between the ideas. Further, the absolute substance is of such a kind that it eviscerates the two others of any self-sustained reality. The ego and the world are brought into mutual connection by the power of God. The universe is truly existent only because God works in it as efficient cause. "Nature is the world-order established by God, and my nature is the assemblage of the powers that God has given me." Reasoning from such premisses, Descartes could not fail to fall into dogmatism. He avoided the logical conclusions of his assumptions—as, for example, in explaining the relation between body and mind—by holding more than one opinion. Occasionalism, with its circumstantial divine interference, explains the otherwise inexplicable union of the thinking with the extended substance in man; and Spinozism brings to light the true relation between absolute substance and its created fellows. Mind and matter, as Spinoza argued, are, on Descartes' principles, nothing but emanations from deity. God has existed from eternity, and the mutually exclusive modes of thought and extension have always proceeded from him. If, then, things in the finite world have truth or meaning, this reality is due, not to themselves, but to the infinite substance on which they depend.

Leibniz, the last of the great rationalists, was so far faithful to the early principles of Cartesianism that he

refused to accept Spinoza's interpretation. "I think, therefore I am." I myself am the exclusive ground of my own being; my certainty of this is self-demonstrative. But, if God be the only reality, this cannot be the case. Leibniz, arguing in some such way, attempted to hold by Descartes' first principle. To this end he formulated his doctrine of monads. In essential respects monadism is the antithesis of Spinoza's universalism. Leibniz affirms that every individual thing in the world is a self-sustained substance; there is not one substance, but an endless number. According to their several natures they belong to lower or higher classes. Although mutually exclusive of one another, it has been so contrived by deity that they shall work out together the harmonious world of experience with which all sane people are alike acquainted. The three rationalistic systems thus dogmatically affirm one or other among the more impressive aspects of the universe. Descartes insists upon the originality of the self—that is, upon its difference from every other. Spinoza sees nought but the essential oneness of things as members of a vast unity which endows them with the meaning that they have. Leibniz in a manner combines both these conceptions, but he adds another of his own. He is impressed with the differences among things. So, while approaching Descartes in his doctrine of the self-evidencing of substances, and Spinoza in his theory of the relation between substances, his conception of entelechies remains peculiar. All the rationalistic systems are therefore partial, and in addition each is marred by a special dogma concerning self, or absolute substance, or mechanical harmony. Conse-

quently they are equally inadequate to the problem which they profess to solve. The appeal to the subjective factor in the constitution of knowledge has been unsuccessful.

The psychological predecessors of Kant require less attention. Their work had not so much direct influence upon his speculation, the importance of Hume notwithstanding. The British successors of Descartes, like Descartes himself, made a certain gratuitous assumption. They held that the senses were the main sources of true knowledge. Experience, viewed as the contact with reality by means of the bodily organism, they considered the efficient cause of ideas. Although, in the absence of other basis, irresistible intuition guarantees such notions as God and self, all other information is traceable to the senses. Impressions produce simple ideas, and more complex conceptions, which involve knowledge of the "relations of things," are due to a supposititious causal reference. We are acquainted with the qualities of substance, for example, but of substance itself we are ignorant, and so we suppose it to be the substratum necessary to the inherence of qualities. The unknowable, in short, was for Locke the groundwork of all the most certain contents of knowledge. Berkeley, perceiving the absurdity of the position, attempted to express this unintelligible substance in terms of the intelligible. He too assumed, in the first instance, that the senses convey true knowledge. But he set this knowledge in an entirely new relation to the thinker. So far from the mind being a *tabula rasa* on which sensation writes, it is rather a conscious activity whose perceptions bring sensation into the sphere of reality. *Esse is percipi*. It is a

power, moreover, which gains in constitutive faculty as time goes on. In the course of experience it stores up certain occurrences, as it were, and reproduces them, by a kind of redintegration, in the guise of suggestions. Thus at last, on the occasion of specified sense perceptions, the thinker spontaneously invests them with numerous relations, and so the bare impression is clothed in an ideal completeness, of which it is the suggestion but not the cause. Even this explanation, fascinating as it is in comparison with Locke's, does not take us beyond the empirical standpoint. It is good, maybe, for each individual apart, yet it carries no conviction for others. The assumption still is that knowledge truly exists, and, by consequence, little notice is taken of problems respecting the manner of its existence. Nay, Berkeley's theory is gifted with the semblance of adequacy only by the introduction of unwarranted elements. Consequently Hume, culling premisses from Descartes, Locke, and Berkeley indifferently, took it upon himself to show that knowledge, if dependent on sensational experience, is impossible. Everything is an appearance, the effect of illusion rendered permanent by custom. If man know nothing but sense impressions, and the ideas which follow upon them, then self-consciousness is a delusion resting on two others, and causality is a misleading name which the thinker gives to his own mental impotence. Hume's conclusion thus is, that on the basis of empiricism, systematic knowledge cannot be accounted for save by the supposition that it is the negation of knowledge. Thought is explained only when the utter absurdity of it is fully realised. Consequently, as in the case of reason, the appeal to sense fails lamentably.

II. Berkeley's Nominalistic and Realistic Tendencies.

It is impossible, however, to dismiss Berkeley in the summary manner just indicated. His early nominalism constitutes but a portion of his contribution to speculative theory; and, no matter how convenient it may be to make no further reference, the facts of the case do not permit that total elimination of his later thought in which too many historians are wont to indulge themselves. On the contrary, the truth, so far as concerns Berkeley the *man*, is that his Platonising ideas tend to be the more eminently characteristic.

Fichte once pertinently remarked that "the kind of philosophy which one chooses depends on the kind of man one is. For a philosophical system is not a dead bit of furniture which one can take to one's self, or dispose of as one pleases; but it is endowed with a soul by the soul of the man who has it."¹ Unless there be a conviction that a living metaphysical principle forms an integral part of thought and nature, it is little likely that metaphysical questions, properly so called, will meet response in the individual mind. Those who insist upon weighing things unseen and eternal in the scales of sense and time will probably always be with us. Mechanical categories or biological relationships are all too naturally presumed capable of presenting an exhaustive account of religion and morals. The metaphysical assumptions necessarily implied in mechanics and physiology do not invariably trouble investigators who have been indebted to them. It is obvious, too, that during entire stages in the history of thought the apparent size of objects has obscured real bulk—and

¹ Werke, vol. ii. p. 155.

everything else—beyond the immediate range of vision. So it was with the Greece of the Sophists, so also with Carneades and the Academy, and so with the third quarter of the present century, when, for a brief period, materialism threatened to sweep the board. But this tendency never had better example than in the mental condition of a whole continent, with England most distinguished by defect, during the “second-hand” century, as Carlyle has aptly called it. As in literature so was it in philosophy. “The slops of the court of the Stuarts went into the drama. In philosophy the age had no live, distinct, actuating convictions.” From the prevalence of this spiritual obliquity and moral blindness no one suffered more than Berkeley. In many respects he was the single philosophical prophet calling, as if in a wilderness, to a stiff-necked generation. Where his work was merely destructive—as all metaphysical criticism must, in its first stages, become—it was eagerly canvassed and partly accepted. When it contained constructive elements, and more especially when it pointed to an ultimate theory of the world, it was scorned, distorted, or, as was the historical fact, passed over unheeded. But, as often happens, time is now bringing him some measure of his reward, and the rays thrown upon him by later speculation may, on inquiry, be found to surround his thought with fresh importance, and to reveal its living relation to problems of present interest.

British speculation throughout the century, marked chiefly by the publication of the ‘Essay Concerning Human Understanding’¹ and the ‘Treatise on Human Nature,’² is often called the Lockian epoch. During

¹ 1690.

² 1739.

this period nearly all systematic thinking was determined by the methods and aims of Locke's famous work. Here Locke proposed to discuss the contents, and especially the limits, of human faculty in a "plain historical way." He prepared himself to take experience very much as he found it; and he desired to submit it to an analysis which would exhibit its principal parts, rather than to transform its meaning or elucidate its final import. To lay hold upon obvious facts, to arrive at tolerably assured conclusions—these were his ideals. There was no effort to construct a system. Indeed, so far was he from attempting anything of the sort, that he deliberately set in the background two of the main subjects which are integral portions of a complete philosophical whole. Of ultimate problems relative to the material universe, as of high questions concerning deity, he has little to say except by implication. Man alone, and in particular man's intellectual power, engages his close attention. His method, therefore, tended towards a species of nominalism. The individual interested him much more than the universal. His strange lack of historical imagination—in which he may be compared with Schopenhauer—fostered this tendency. One has only to contrast his 'Treatise on Government' with any modern work on the subject to be impressed by this. In the fourth book of the 'Essay' also, where the all-important question of relation is discussed, this distrust of the universal appears very strongly. The individual mind is conversant about ideas, which are its immediate objects: it is plainly not so familiar with the relations between these ideas.

But, evidently, if this be the case, Locke can only

take us a very little way towards the explanation even of that limited experience which he proposed to analyse. Somehow or other single ideas must be brought into relation, otherwise the unity called experience could not exist. Accordingly, he unconsciously resiles from his early positions in the first book, where he admits a certain kind of intuition and a modicum, if nothing more, of causal reference. Without wish to frame a synthetic scheme, but anxious to dissect the intellectual powers, he assumed the system and discussed the individual mind as he found it existing in this sphere. When he has fully considered ideas, in the second and third books, then, and in a sense then only, he begins to get into difficulties; and the difficulties are occasioned precisely by his attempt to regard these identical ideas in a somewhat less abstract way by bringing them into relation with reality. The moment he moves away from the sure ground, that all concepts can be analysed either into "qualities of external things" or into "operations of our own minds," he is in straits. For he has previously displayed neither concern as to what matter is, nor curiosity regarding the means whereby qualities inherent in matter can come to be ideas of a mind, nor yet care as to the manner in which consciousness passes over into self-consciousness. And it cannot be denied that his doctrine of substance is one of those convenient inventions which help him over difficulties half felt in the earlier portions of the 'Essay,' and clearly prominent in the latter part. The *dicta* concerning substance and phenomena, in the fourth book, are of a piece with the analyses of the "complex idea of Substance" in the early books. Ideas or qualities are known; they are not self-supporting;

they must therefore be referred to *something* which holds them together in a unity—to an *existing* “something.” But existence external to the mind has already been assumed; therefore the reference must be to some external substance lying behind the qualities, and in which they inhere. Berkeley’s acute mind immediately took in the philosophical situation. “We are miserably bantered by our senses, and amused only with the outside and show of things.”¹ His lasting importance in the history of philosophy is that he demanded, if, unlike Hegel, he did not finally accomplish, the dismissal of that metaphysical Brocken spectre, the Unknowable.

Berkeley differs from Locke mainly in that, while retaining the nominalism of the latter in his own first period, he corrects it more and more by the introduction of realism in the second and third phases of his philosophic development. Like Kant, Berkeley is not to be regarded in one aspect of his work only. No doubt, as with the father of criticism, so with our author, the first stage was the most important, in the sense that the later and more constructive speculation presupposes it. In the same manner as his successors, Berkeley at the outset had perforce to pass the assumptions of others in review by means of a species of criticism. The “New Question” was, in the circumstances, just as critical in the best sense of the word as was the inquiry about “synthetic *a priori* judgments.” On the bare statement, that external matter exists, Locke and other forerunners of Berkeley had straightway busied themselves to lead proof that what they did not know, and never could know, possessed actual being. This, as Berkeley made it his first great task to

¹ Prof. Fraser’s Selections, p. 114. (Fourth edition.)

show, was a ridiculous proceeding. It was not enough for him to be told of this unknowable substratum; he must needs get behind the assumption to ask what rational meaning was implied in the simple existence of substance. He conceived it his business, in short, to point out that, were substance properly understood, the so-called proof of its existence would *ipso facto* be rendered wholly superfluous. "Nothing," he says, in striking the key-note of his investigation, "seems of more importance towards erecting a firm system of sound and real knowledge, which may be proof against the assaults of Scepticism, than to lay the beginning in a distinct explication of *what is* meant by THING, REALITY, EXISTENCE; for in vain shall we dispute concerning the 'real existence of things,' or pretend to any knowledge thereof, so long as we have not fixed the meaning of these words. THING or BEING is the most general name of all; it comprehends under it two entirely distinct and heterogeneous, and which have nothing in common but the name—viz., SPIRITS and IDEAS."¹ And as Professor Fraser's explanatory annotation runs, "This throws light on Berkeley's purpose, which was not to *prove* the reality of the material world, but — by showing what its 'reality' involves, *i.e.*, what we are entitled to *mean* when we say that an external thing 'exists' — to make proof superfluous."² In order to do this, however, Berkeley had no resource but to initiate and carry out a certain destructive process. This process, alike in conception and scope, is formulated by him, almost as an *obiter dictum*, in the phrase *Esse is percipi*. Objects are ideas, he in effect proves, and there is an end of the

¹ Selections, pp. 105, 106.

² *Ibid.*, p. 106, note 1.

discussion. The whole range of metaphysical inquiry was thus altered at a stroke, as it were. No need longer to enlarge upon the actuality of sense-objects, nor to trace their manifestations as affecting the percipient; but every need, because sense-objects exist, to discover the ultimate import of reality. Causes are now to be investigated to the exclusion of qualities. But in order to bring about this reversal, it was necessary to resolve the latter into ideas, and in the course of this resolution Berkeley inevitably took several steps which rendered his thought, for the time being, not unlike that of Hume. To isolate the phrase, *Esse* is *percipi*, more particularly if the *percipi* be held to imply exclusively the perception of a single individual through the medium of his senses only, is undoubtedly to go far towards enunciating a method which leads to conclusions that "admit of no answer, but produce no conviction." Yet, this is to eviscerate Berkeley; and Hume, as a Neo-Berkeleyan, to coin a word, has in one aspect of it no more right to his philosophical position than F. A. Lange and his Neo-Kantian followers. Extreme nominalism, which is certainly a prominent factor in Berkeley's first period, gradually disappears, as he progresses, into the shadow land of inane abstractions. To Berkeley, as read by Hume, hardly any import conceivable by the human mind can be attached.

At the same time, the 'Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge'¹ contains a very clearly marked negative element. "For myself, I find indeed I have indeed a faculty of imagining, or representing to myself, the idea of those particular things I have

¹ 1710.

perceived, and of variously compounding and dividing them. . . . I can consider the hand, the eye, the nose, each by itself, abstracted or separated from the rest of the body.—But, then, whatever hand or eye I imagine, it must have some particular shape and colour. Likewise the idea of man that I frame to myself must be either of a white, or a black, or a tawny, a straight, or a crooked, a tall, or a low, or a middle-sized man. I cannot by any effort of thought conceive the abstract idea.—. . . And it is equally impossible for me to form the *abstract* idea of motion distinct from the body moving, and which is neither swift nor slow, curvilinear nor rectilinear; and the like may be said of all other abstract general ideas whatsoever. To be plain, I am myself able to abstract *in one sense*, as when I consider some particular parts or qualities separated from others, with which, though they are united in some object, yet it is possible they may really exist without them. But I deny that I can abstract from one another, or conceive separately, those qualities which it is impossible should exist so separated; or that I can frame a general notion by abstracting from particulars in the manner aforesaid—which last are the two proper acceptations of abstraction.”¹ Nevertheless, it can be shown that this critical tendency, if properly viewed in relation to other points, possesses no little significance. It is evinced principally in Berkeley’s attack upon “abstract ideas.” Like Bacon, he displayed the strongest objection to the substitution of General Terms for individual realities, and freely expressed himself, often somewhat unguardedly, in discussing the question.

¹ Treatise, Introduction, sec. 10.

His procedure was indispensable to the task which the state of philosophy, and his own bent of mind, set him. Need was to be rid of Locke's non-existent, but much "proved," Substance, and Berkeley's was the type of thought by which this abstraction was to be destroyed. He altered the trend of speculation, and in a manner renewed philosophy, by pointing out, first, that the only self-sustained existence in this world, of the nature usually accredited to substance, is a percipient mind; and second, that the only cause of phenomena, in the widest sense of the term, is also a mind, now, however, revealing itself in volition. The whole tenor of previous presumptions respecting existence was thus changed. The really concrete—Mind *quâ* your mind and my mind—stood in place of the imagined abstraction, Substance; perceived ideas were substituted for imperceptible substrata. The so-called causes operative in outer nature were brought back from their absolute externality, and organically connected with mind's experience of Mind, or of mental activity in the guise of Notions. In order to work such transformation on philosophy, Berkeley had, no doubt, to insist upon his doctrines with considerable force; and in this insistence is to be found the distinct leaning towards nominalism—towards Humian scepticism—which characterises this period of his development. On the other side, it is to be remembered that this tendency of his was not without intrinsic value. His faithfulness to experience, regarded in the broad sense, is remarkable. His thought, on this account, conforms to one of the chief tests to which every metaphysical system must submit. Single given circumstances receive most patient attention. They are not confronted with

a formula that compels them to come in ; rather, careful investigation is employed to coax them, as it were, into explaining themselves. This is the significant feature of Berkeley's nominalism, as it is of every philosophy which has legitimate, not to say indispensable, nominalistic leanings. For "to awaken intelligent response in individual minds to the rational judgments and spiritual convictions on which human life ought to rest is the chief aim of philosophical education."¹

But this furnishes only one aspect of the entire truth. Berkeley has often been accused of what is tantamount to lunacy. "When Berkeley said there was no matter, it was no matter what he said." This is a Dogberry's view of idealism. For, although insisting that the *esse* of things is their *percipi*, our author sticks so closely to experience that his position is not unlike Reid's—*pace* Dr Hutchison Stirling.² Matter, in the shape of the unknowable external "something" peculiar to Descartes and Locke, has certainly been dismissed. But it has been reinstated in another, and more intelligible, form. The mere present possession of one, or of several, perceptions, goes a small way towards explaining experience as we know it. Berkeley, by means of the introduction of "judgments of suggestion," and of the celebrated "visual language," supplies the matter about which Dr Johnson was so certain. He was not the fool his critics would have had him ; he knew as well as they that, by simply turning his back on the outstretched landscape, he did not thereby annihilate it. Nay, he knew a great deal better than they what was implied in the bare statement that

¹ Selections, Introduction, p. xlix.

² Cf. Journal of Speculative Philosophy, vol. vii. p. 12 *sq.*

the scene constituted a landscape, and did not simply consist of a fortuitous collection of heterogeneous particulars.

If, then, this be a defensible estimate of the positive value of Berkeley's nominalistic tendency, of his evisceration of abstract ideas, of his urgency respecting the vital importance of individual percipient minds, criticism of these, his early doctrines, must be sought in another direction. His "dualism" consists in his conviction that every possible factor of experience can be brought under one of four great classes. It cannot but be either a perceiving mind or an idea perceived by such a mind; either a willing "spirit" or something willed by this spirit. This is conspicuous in the 'Treatise,' and we find it echoed in the preface to 'Hylas': "Upon the common principles of philosophers, we are not assured of the existence of things from their being perceived. And we are taught to distinguish their real nature from that which falls under our senses. Hence arise Scepticism and Paradoxes. It is not enough that we see and feel, that we taste and smell a thing: its true nature, its absolute external entity, is still concealed. For though it be the fiction of our own brain, we have made it inaccessible to all our faculties. Sense is fallacious; reason defective. We spend our lives in doubting of those things which other men evidently know, and believing those things which they laugh at and despise. . . . As it was my intention to convince Sceptics and Infidels by reason, so it has been my endeavour strictly to observe the most rigid laws of reasoning. And, to an impartial reader, I hope it will be manifest that the sublime notion of a God, and the

comfortable expectation of immortality, do naturally arise from a close and methodical application of thought.”¹ Strange as it may seem, Berkeley’s idealism is practically a realism. For the “representative idea,” of which Reid made so much, is, on inspection, found to be not representative—there is nothing of which it can be the representation. Here his theory is defective. He does not attempt any satisfactory explanation of the manner in which, on his premisses, the universe comes to be a rational concatenated whole. His interest in present experience—his nominalism—appears for the moment to leave no room for the equally legitimate and necessary discussion of universals. He advances the readily understood proposition that the “material world is a system of interpretable signs.” But of the origin and present maintenance of this system, as of the reason for the interpretability of the signs, he has little or nothing to tell.² Expectation, the essential feature of the “judgment of suggestion,” has no absolute guarantee. That is to say, the principles on which this expectation relies have not been brought to light. They have perhaps been assumed—they have certainly not been subjected to criticism. Of course, after a fashion, the theory of causality favoured by Berkeley supplies this want. Nevertheless, there can be no question that this theory was at first *favoured* merely and not sufficiently elaborated. Indeed, there is no little evidence for the conclusion that Berkeley never brought himself to very clear consciousness regarding it. Thus it may be said, by way of summing up, that while Berkeley, in his early nominalistic stage,

¹ Works, vol. i. pp. 258-260 (Fraser’s edition).

² Cf. Selections, p. 159 *sq.*

did magnificent service to philosophy, by disposing of abstract ideas and of representative perceptions, he was also, by the very fact of this nominalism, too ready to concur in Locke's conclusion that "experience" and "knowledge," when closely examined, turn out to be convertible terms. It was necessary to correct this half-view by the introduction of another, and Berkeley's later work to some extent provided for, if it did not execute, this all-important change.

If at first Berkeley was scarcely conscious that an isolated "thing" is as great an absurdity as Locke's substance, he came in the end to formulate this truth with remarkable insight. We are the more able to give prominence to this aspect of his work that our present purpose is, not so much to consider his historical influence, as to notice the different strands in his philosophy which may possibly afford guidance in present difficulties. There are several famous passages¹ in 'Siris' to the effect that knowledge of a thing depends upon understanding, not upon sense. "The mind may use sense and fancy as means whereby to arrive at knowledge, yet sense or soul, so far forth as sensitive, knoweth nothing." Thirty-four years before these brave words were written, however, Berkeley had placed on record, in his works on Vision, the first thoughts by which he was at last led so far afield from his earliest principles. Indeed it might be argued with much fairness that two years prior even to this time he had arrived, in 'Alciphron,'² at a conception of the universal element from which his youthful nominalism could derive correction. In answer to the

¹ Cf. Selections, pp. 350, 351, 375.

² Cf. Life and Letters of Berkeley, p. 195 *sq.* (Fraser's edition).

question, Why is immediate perception interpretable mediately? he pointed out that the significance attendant upon sight, in regions beyond sight, depends on the unnoted circumstance that man's spiritual nature informs him of an actively maintained and rational correspondence between the seen and the tangible. Resistance, extension, and the like cannot be seen, yet by sight they appeal to us. How so? Because we believe that every perception implies more than it perceptively intimates. The smallest visible object carries with it an intimation of divine order in the universe. Here we are slowly approaching Berkeley's realism, and this is his first constructive, as distinguished from his negative, work. At this stage, as before, little attempt is made to rationalise the implied presuppositions. The curious doctrine of the arbitrariness of the connection between suggestion and the suggested is still favoured, probably as a protest against prevalent necessarianism. The reasons for the fact that perception is practically interpretation are, accordingly, not thought out, nor is any adequate explanation of the divine plan provided. But the Platonising tendency here observable—though not so clearly in one aspect as in 'Alciphron'—finds its consummation and reaches its most definite development in 'Siris.'

The inner bonds which weld the perceived universe into a rational whole are now made subjects of reflection. By implication Berkeley points out that the things of sense, so prominent in the 'Principles of Human Knowledge,' are but the veil behind which ultimate realities lie. In them these realities are revealed to man. Some portions of 'Siris' are of great

significance in connection with problems presently under discussion. Take, for example, the following. Aristotle "held that the mind of man was a *tabula rasa*, and that there were no innate ideas. Plato, on the contrary, held original ideas in the mind; that is, notions which never were or can be in the sense, such as, being, beauty, goodness, likeness, parity. Some, perhaps, may think the truth to be this: that there are properly no *ideas*, or passive objects, in the mind but what were derived from sense; but that there are also besides these her own acts or operations, such as *notions*. It is a maxim of the Platonic philosophy, that the soul of man was originally furnished with native inbred notions, and stands in need of sensible occasions, not absolutely for producing them, but only for awakening, rousing, or exciting into act what was already pre-existent, dormant, and latent in the soul,—as things are said to be laid up in the memory, though not actually perceived until they happen to be called forth and brought into view by other objects. This notion seemeth somewhat different from that of innate ideas as understood by those moderns who have attempted to explode them. To *understand* and to *be* are, according to Parmenides, the same thing. And Plato in his seventh Letter makes no difference between *νοῦς* and *ἐπιστήμη*, mind and knowledge. Whence it follows that mind, knowledge, and notions, either in habit or in act, always go together."¹ Here Berkeley contemplates, perhaps not with any full consciousness, that union of nominalism with realism which, amid modern perplexities, many are seeking. If his earliest work be full of significance, because in it he explodes the

¹ Works, vol. ii. pp. 484, 485.

absurdities of abstract ideas, and in so doing practises that faithfulness to experience which is the precondition of all satisfactory philosophy, he here departs from his first emphasising of individualised perception, and seems to assert that all men share with deity in a common reason—a circumstance that accounts at once for the unity of knowledge, for the rationality or interpretability of the universe, and for the earnest faith in which, after it has pushed reason to the uttermost verge, philosophy cannot but culminate. This, Berkeley's final universalistic idealism, no matter how little systematised it may be, points to a synthesis in which the inter-relation of thought and being may be set forth without prejudice to the positive existence of either element. Such a theory would not appear simply as an initial assumption, at once startling and unsatisfactory, but would come as the natural inference from a faithful study of the concrete. In short, the present value of Berkeley's philosophy, taken as a whole, is that it supplies a practical exposure of the fallacy, minted for contemporary currency by Pessimism, that things and principles are identical, have no individual persistence of their own, because they happen to be related to one another.

But, if Berkeley thus laid hold upon personality and its ultimacy with wonderful acuteness,¹ he did not formulate his conception of the connection between human spirits and the Divine Being. Although he vigorously pressed the truth, "no object without a subject," he did not elucidate the question regarding the place of rational principles in the constitution of knowledge. Although he set aside abstract matter, and sub-

¹ Cf. Selections, pp. 140, 141, 256.

stituted for it a cosmos governed by reason, he had but little to tell regarding the manner and method of this government. In other words, he did not attempt an explanation of the constitutive principles present alike in thought and things. He rather made it his business to emphasise the indispensableness of thought, and to set forth the implicit rationality of the world,—to confute the materialists, to repel scepticism, and to set at nought believers in chance. The instruction which may to-day be derived from the inner tendencies of Berkeley's speculation was missed by his contemporaries and successors. Hume, in historical fact, came to be his universally acknowledged, if illegitimate, descendant. From consideration of the 'Principles of Human Knowledge' alone proceeded scepticism; 'Siris' is the foundation of a relative, because theistic, idealism. The latter must at the present juncture be regarded as more important than the former. For, while Hume attempted to take away from Berkeley even that which he at first had, others have tried more recently to theorise absolutely problems which he merely suggested. Yet, notwithstanding its supreme moment in certain directions, this last movement has been in some ways as partial as its sceptical predecessor. The pessimistic accompaniments of current philosophy force this conclusion irresistibly upon us.

Berkeley's theory, in its two aspects, has thus the distinction of universalising certain insular doctrines peculiar to British thought, and, as a result, it comes into close contact with questions raised by the most recent speculation. His later tendencies cannot be viewed simply as matters of taste that one may note and then pass over. Far rather, the finger of criticism

has been laid, by implication, upon the weakness of nearly all British metaphysic in the past. Excessive anxiety to be practical, and to keep well within the presumed limits of human faculty, circumscribed Locke's outlook; and, for a time at least, analogous considerations hampered Berkeley, as they were afterwards to mislead Hume and, in a measure, Reid. But far more than the others, Berkeley freed himself from these trammels. "When we compare 'Siris' with the 'Principles of Human Knowledge,' we find important differences between Berkeley's philosophy when he was sixty and when he was twenty-five. The universals of reason here overshadow the perishable phenomena of Sense and the Suggestions of sensuous Imagination. Sensible things are looked at as adumbrations of a reality above and beyond Nature, which reflective philosophy helps us to recognise. The objects of sense-perception are here called *phenomena*, instead of 'sense-ideas' or 'sensations'; while Ideas (not in Locke's vague meaning, and in Berkeley's early meaning of the term *idea*, but in Plato's) are recognised as the proper objects of thought, involved in the ultimate explanation of things. . . . The antithesis of self and the phenomena present in Sense is prominent in Berkeley's 'Principles of Human Knowledge'; the ultimate unity of the Universe in Reason is prominent in 'Siris,' which enforces the harmony of physical causation and science with the constant agency of supernatural Reason and Will. Natural causation is thus the physical aspect of the supreme moral or spiritual Agent who is manifested in the natural world,—immanent in yet transcending all so-called physical causes."¹ Moved by this intuitive idealism,

¹ Selections, pp. 335-337.

Berkeley has unconsciously so contrived as to bring us continually into contact with those ultimate speculative problems which it has been contemporary fashion to regard as the private property of a single school. But throughout this work, his cautious and critical spirit has prevented him from being led captive by any of the shibboleths in which current thought deals so extensively. In one who respects Berkeley's profound piety, agnosticism can find no response, while, on the other side, appreciation of Locke's wholesome estimate of the insignificance of human faculty shows the egotistical pantheism of some German thinkers in all its naked absurdity.

Berkeley's philosophical development furnishes another confirmation of the truism, that psychological study of individual experience, like other forms of scientific research, implies certain metaphysical presuppositions. By the elucidation of these, the import, if not the scope, of knowledge may be largely altered. To this discussion modern speculation, in the direct line from Kant, has been devoted with some exclusiveness. For Berkeley's elevation of the conscious subject to what may be aptly called a position of independence, like his explanation of experience by reference to indwelling deity, was the result rather of a bare statement than of an articulated scheme. The scheme, the whole scheme, and nothing but the scheme, has since been the main quest of systematic thinkers. Where Berkeley had left an unbridged gap—a dualism between finite minds and the Infinite Mind—Kant attempted to construct a unity from the side of the finite, and furnished only with its scant resources. He had at first a dim perception, more clearly expressed, no doubt, in the

second edition of the 'Critique,' and brought at last to full consciousness in Fichte and Hegel, that the mechanical category of action and reaction, employed by Berkeley to describe the connection between the Divine Mind and finite intelligences, must be transcended. The implications of such a relationship had, in short, to be unravelled by a fresh analysis of mental action, and, in particular, by a reconsideration of the part played by mind in the constitution of ordinary experience.

III. Kant, and the Nominalist and Realist Interpretations of his System.

Prior to Kant, thinkers had assumed the truth of knowledge, and had tried to exhibit its ground and content. Led by the circumstances of historical development, he set himself the entirely new question, How is knowledge possible at all? His interpreters have been prone to regard his philosophy merely as a metaphysico-ethical system. While insisting upon his peculiar place in the historical development of thought, they have frequently disregarded the very conditions out of which his distinctive genius grew. But the critical philosophy is the key to modern speculation as much because it is an autobiographical record, as on account of its internal doctrine. Kant's personal experiences in the struggle for "more light" determined his work, both formally and materially, even more perhaps than his conscious system-making. The meeting-point of several theories, his intellect passed through successive phases, and at the last, in his completed doctrine, the traces of this transformation are everywhere evident.

Kant's first business, then, was to thrust aside the presuppositions of his predecessors, and with them the various consequences of which they had been productive. He did not assume knowledge, but he said, We have knowledge: how does it come into being? In particular, he pointed out that mind is not merely a passive receptacle of ideas, but that it has a certain constitutive power of its own: we declare, not only that two and two make four, but that this will always be so. Mind adds the element of universality and necessity. How does it do this? in other words, how are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible? They exist, but in obedience to what conditions? In the 'Critique of Pure Reason' he shows successively, first, that these mind-constituted judgments are abstract general statements, and are therefore subjectively *a priori*; second, that the *a posteriori* objects, to which these forms apply, are also mind-originated. "The understanding makes nature, but out of a material which it does not make." And thirdly, that, because form is dependent upon matter for its realisation, the *a priori* categories can only be applied within the limits of *a posteriori* sense experience. Man, viewed purely as an intellectual being, knows phenomena, not realities. But Kant did not rest content with this. He went on to point out, in the 'Critique of Practical Reason,' that man, as a moral being, can get beyond phenomena to noumenal verities. The central ideas of God, freedom, and immortality, which pure reason is condemned to pursue resultlessly, are thus vindicated in the sphere of the ethical consciousness. Without them rational moral law could not be fulfilled; and this law is unconditionally laid upon man. His

burden of duty is not greater than he can bear, and so the conditions of well-doing must be preserved.

Criticising, as he did, now Hume and the empiricists, now Leibniz and the Wolffians, Kant could not fail to be obscure, if not self-contradictory. The interpretations put upon the first edition of his 'Critique' caused him to introduce what many hold to be essential alterations in the second edition. Moreover, the sharp division between the intellect and the will, with the limitation of the former and the final vindication of the latter, has rendered possible a fragmentary interpretation of his system, based on a partial acceptance of its results. Ample reasons have unquestionably existed for the recent remarkable upgrowth of Kantian literature, with its numerous controversies and variant readings of the thinker's meaning.

One may therefore reasonably inquire, What necessity is there for treating Kant's work according to a peculiar method? In stating his doctrine, why not abide by his own words and explain his ideas, as is customary in relation to other men, by reference to his own expression of them? In answering this question one best realises the special difficulties presented by Kant, and obtains insight into the causes which have led to such various and mutually exclusive interpretations of his system. Like every other thinker, he was so far bowed down by the weight of the past. The remnants of scholasticism traceable in the post-Leibnitian rationalism of Germany—in which he was trained—find place in the completed critical scheme. They supplied a ready-made framework, within which he attempted to build up his own new thought. The form of his theory, to be brief, was in essentials unsuited to its

matter. Hence, throughout, that series of imperfections, of misleading divisions, and of dubious formulæ which has done so much to obscure the writer's ultimate meaning.

To take but a few examples at random. The absolute distinction instituted between various faculties of the mind, as between *Verstand* and *Vernunft*, does not only affect readers of Kant to-day, it affected the philosopher himself. He gradually came to regard these faculties, which, in their abstraction from the self, have no real existence, as actual entities. Characteristic activities of thought, instead of being straight-way referred to one ego, were viewed as proceeding from separate faculties endowed with a selfhood of their own. Understanding, Imagination, Judgment, Reason, though but elements in a single mind, were treated as if each possessed a fully furnished individuality peculiar to itself. Nay, more, each was in a manner banished to a region into which none of its fellows had right of entrance. On this account, if on no other, many are unable to admit that the different parts of the 'Critique' stand in organic relation to one another. A similar difficulty is caused by the separation between understanding and sense. Antagonistic in nature, these two factors of knowledge are brought into mutual connection only within a sphere which is void of ultimate truth. The shade of reality is a ghostly attendant upon man's mental being; the thinker need but try to grasp the actually existent to discover that he is deluding himself. In the same way, the transition from the intellectual to the moral sphere is so abrupt as to amount, in the eyes of many, to no transition. It is the result of an after-thought, they say, and, as such, it

does not possess any vital relation to the explanation of experience already tendered in the 'Critique of Pure Reason.' So, too, when well within the ethical range, reason and the passions seem to fall asunder. The bare form of the moral law has thus no natural field in which it can find content. Finally, the idea of design, enunciated in the 'Critique of Judgment,' looks like a clumsy attempt to bridge over the chasm between the two earlier 'Critiques.'

Little wonder then that, confronted with so many apparent anomalies, interpreters of Kant have found themselves compelled to rearrange materials according to their own methods. The Kantian philosophy, in short, as set forth by its author, required reformation. It has been the effort of Kant scholars, especially in recent years, to bring about this reform in a variety of ways, each commentator usually having certain views specially his own. Some, for instance, choose to lay exclusive stress upon the sceptical results of the 'Critique of Pure Reason'; others fall back upon "primary data of consciousness" analogous to Kant's *a priori* elements of experience, but not, as with him, mere forms; others, again, transform the critical philosophy by setting aside the letter and educing what they allege to be its inner spirit.

Regarding the matter in this light, and, for the sake of brevity, restricting observation to wide divergences, it may be said that at present three main competing interpretations of Kant solicit support. There is the Neo-Kantian, or nominalist, interpretation, strictly so-called; there is that advanced by the English idealists, which is not properly Neo-Kantian, but realistic or Neo-Hegelian; and there is Schopenhauer's variant,

which, starting as a kind of nominalism, finally swamps all individualistic elements in a barren realism. The two former views are presented here, not so much for their own sakes, as to illustrate the extreme difficulty of the task which the commentator on Kant must needs perform. Their opposition, also, serves to prove that the result of the investigation inevitably depends largely on the spirit in which the writer approaches his subject. Indeed, as respects Kant, method is everything.

According to Lange,¹ and those who represent him in this country, Kant's great and revolutionary contribution to speculation is given solely in the 'Critique of Pure Reason.' Nay, more, the negative and destructive results reached in the last portion of the first 'Critique' constitute its distinctive merit. Modern science, its path barred by those impenetrables, eternal matter and eternal force, concludes that knowledge must be of the phenomenal only. This is also Kant's deliverance in the 'Dialectic.' The central verities of spirit—the Soul, the Universe, and God—are beyond the ken of human intellect. Knowledge is obtained by one process, and by this alone. The mind, it is alleged, applies its forms, the categories, to shapeless materials *given* by sensation. The products of sensation are knowable only when thus moulded, and the categories have no office save in the work of moulding. But the ideas of self, of the world as a whole, and of God, are noumena or ideas of reason. Not being matter of sense, the

¹ See his 'History of Materialism,' especially vol. iii. of the English translation. It is of interest to notice that a *scientific* movement, of which Professor Huxley may be taken as representative, and a *theological* one, associated with the name of Ritschl, can be affiliated with this view.

categories cannot be applied to them. So, too, as respects the external world, things *quâ* actual realities are not matter of sense. Consequently, what is known of the so-called material world is wholly phenomenal. Reality, as it were, extends inward, and it extends outward; but knowledge is confined to that middle kingdom where neither inner nor outer reality has any place. In order to appraise Kant's value, then, according to the Neo-Kantians, it is necessary to cancel the subsidiary treatises, and to treat the 'Critique of Pure Reason,' particularly in its final conclusions, as if it were the entire critical scheme. This done, man, as science and philosophy are agreed, knows nothing save appearances. Ideas, divorced from realities, form the sum-total of experience. Metaphysics, religion, and the rest, which deal in spiritual verities, are illusory. The notions of God, and so forth, are conceptions naturally incident to the human mind. Religion and metaphysics are to be encouraged as harmless amusements—toys to turn humanity away from the stern spectacle of its own finitude. They are good if so be it is recognised that they are void of truth. Experience is fully explained only when it is roundly condemned.

To all intents and purposes Kant's theory is thus transformed from a metaphysic into a nominalistic epistemology. No longer an exhibition of the relation between knowledge and reality, it is directed, on the contrary, to subjective considerations merely. The office of criticism now becomes the duty of sharply defining the limits of man's experience. Thought may be a wide field, but what is usually regarded as the more important part of its range appears, on examination, to be little better than a mirage. Genuine science,

which concerns itself immediately with phenomena, alone possess the power of attaining verifiable results. Metaphysical, or rational, pseudo-science, which would fain adjust the relations subsisting between ideas by reference to an immanent principle, is constitutionally incapable of verification. It is the negation of science. Indeed, only as it explicitly recognises this its own utter failure, can it even exist. The latter, in other words, is foredoomed to inferiority to the former—nay, is chained down to it. For notions, whatever their seeming scope, are no more than signs—names given to what we actually know as things. Although they serve more or less to indicate realities, they can never themselves become real. Making due allowance for differences caused by advance in physical research, Kant is, in this deduction, turned back to the fourteenth century. Nigh all that he is forced to appear, William of Occam was.

But, secondly, the Neo-Hegelian¹ method of treating Kant also involves the adoption of a certain philosophical standpoint. And here matters controversial once again emerge, and merit treatment at some length. To take the method itself. Nothing is more characteristic of such a representative book as, for example, Mr Caird's,² than the open manner in which the intention is intimated. From the preface to the last chapter, the nature and necessity of the attitude are abundantly

¹ I use this term, not as a label or epithet, but for convenience sake.

² With which compare Professor Watson's 'Kant and his English Critics'; Professor Adamson's 'On the Philosophy of Kant'; and Professor Paulsen's 'Versuch einer Entwicklungs-Geschichte der Kantischen Erkenntnisslehre.'

discussed and as abundantly illustrated. "No one," as the preface points out,¹ "who recognises that progress in speculative philosophy is a progress to self-consciousness, and that such progress always involves a conflict between the conscious and the unconscious, even in the minds of those who are its most prominent representatives, will fail to see that the only valuable criticism is that which turns what is latent in the thought of a great writer against what is explicit, and thereby makes his works a stepping-stone to results which he did not himself attain. It was those who stoned the prophets that built their sepulchres. Those who really revered them, showed it by following the spirit derived from them to new issues." Kant, then, is to be interpreted, not as he exactly is, but as his influence came to be developed in succeeding systems. To indicate the theory ultimately implied—as, for example, the German idealists did in the course of the history of philosophy—is the business of the critic; he is not to occupy himself overmuch with the letter of the system nor with its actual achievements. No better specimen of the practical consequences of this method could be adduced than that given in the treatment of the Transcendental Deduction.² In this exposition we see the method in full working order. The following is a typical example of the manner of its operation: Kant "points out that the categories are forms of the *a priori* synthesis by which objects are determined as such, and, as we shall see, he carries them back to 'pure apperception' as the unity out of which they spring. But instead of showing directly how

¹ The Critical Philosophy of Kant, vol. i. pp. x, xi.

² Ibid., vol. i., book i., chap. iv.

they spring from that unity, he has taken the round-about method of basing his list of the pure conceptions that rule the synthetic judgment upon the aspects or modes of analytic judgment, and he has simply adopted the list of these modes from formal Logic. But, *if he had realised his own ideal*, he would have been obliged, first of all, to show how it follows from the idea of the analytic judgment that the list contains just these and no other forms. And, even after he had used the 'logical system' so derived as a clue for the discovery of the categories, he would not have considered himself free from the obligation of showing *from the nature of the synthetic judgment itself* that they form a complete system of *a priori* conceptions." And again: "Kant *silently substitutes* for the idea of a pure unity that is neither perception nor conception, the idea of an intuitive understanding which is both. And it is only as he does so that he can get from it that ideal of knowledge which he opposes to experience. For it is impossible by mere abstraction to reach a point of view from which we can see the limitation of that from which we abstract. Such a point of view we can only find in a unity in relation to which the opposition of conception and perception sinks into an opposition of elements which imply each other. Only as we are able to rise above the relative or imperfect unity of perception and conception in experience to a principle which is capable of turning it into an absolute unity can it be possible for us to see its relativity and imperfection. Or if, in relation to the unity of self-consciousness, we can see the phenomenal character of the objects of experience, self-consciousness must be itself a principle which will ultimately enable

us to turn knowledge of the phenomenon into knowledge of the noumenon." This plan of procedure, according to which it is stated, not what Kant was, but what he implied or might legitimately be made to imply, is resorted to again and again. Separations are bridged over, divisions are healed, doubtful points are forced to assume clearness, with the result that an unaccustomed air of unity comes over the loosely connected portions of the system. In short, a *tendency* is imparted, as it were, to the unpromising materials, and is treated as their valuable, if not their visible, import.

Having tried to obtain some conception of the method employed, it is necessary, in the next place, to give attention to the reform worked in the critical system by its aid. What is it, or rather wherein lies its distinctive character? The change is most noticeable in metaphysical connections, and affects, in particular, Kant's presentation of the Transcendental Deduction and of the Principles of the Pure Understanding, more especially those known as the Postulates of Empirical Thought. The reason for this lies chiefly in the fact that Kant had not, any more than other thinkers, formulated a satisfactory reply to the question, What is Being? The effort is to educe a competent answer, and this is done by working mainly with Kantian materials viewed in the light of Kant's own mental development, and of his influence upon later speculation. No one will desire to controvert the initial assumption implicitly made. All are agreed, we take it, that knowledge, of whatever sort, is subject to the limitations and other conditions incident to the nature of the thinking subject. Thought is indeed not the thinker, but the thinker is aware that

his thought, and therefore his knowledge, is subject to certain sufficiently obvious restrictions. So far, while remaining, so to speak, within the unity of the subject, there is little or no difficulty. But when it is asked, What is Being? how is Reality constituted? grave problems at once arise. The new reading is intended, if not to supply a complete solution of these problems, at least to obviate their recurrence: it makes the Kantian theory face both ways, to object and subject alike. The presuppositions of this ontology, and its results, are implied in the treatment of Kant's ethical and religious works, so that, as a consequence, the critical scheme is resystematised according to a fresh plan, and for the express purpose of adequately explaining the office of mind in the universe—a task which Kant himself had only indicated in some of its general aspects, and had redirected by his central doctrine of the mind-conditionedness of objects. The Neo-Hegelians, going beyond this, make it their effort to show precisely *how* matter derived from sense, and forms inherent in mind, unite to constitute reality; *how* passion due to physical need, and the formal law of the inner nature, combine to produce moral action; *how* subjective principles of judgment, such as are involved in questions of taste, imply an objective world which partakes of the character of these very principles, thereby proving that the former are not truly subjective nor the latter truly objective.

Stated very generally, Kant's metaphysical doctrine in effect is, that mind by its own power unifies the experience which we possess. This it does by the imposition of forms native to itself upon matter presented through sense from without. As we have already seen,

no one would deny the first position—the fact of the indispensableness of mind. The second is so far open to dispute, that few can accept Kant's account of the *manner* in which mind performs its function. The idealists, like the critical school, depart from Kant here, and in this departure introduce reform. Their version of the process they hold to be, not certainly the explicit conclusion of the Kantian philosophy, but its inner tendency. Kant, to a great extent hindered by the methods and presuppositions of his predecessors, had separated from the first between mind and matter. That he did this without full perception of results is proved by the fact that he is continually inventing machinery to overcome the separation which he had formerly set up. It was an egregious mistake of his to suppose that an external source, like sense, furnished mind with content *independent* of mental activity. And in order to comprehend him aright, it is imperatively necessary to observe the gradual movement of his thought towards ridding itself of these sense-data. Careful study of Kant himself, and due consideration of his influence on after speculation, show that, so far from understanding and the manifold of sense being separated, they are really the same thing viewed from opposite sides. Doubtless Kant himself never saw fully all that is implied in the interdependence of subjective and objective. He never observed, for example, that the conviction of personal identity is not merely an analytic judgment concerning the persistence of the abstract ego, but is also, just because of *the identity*, a synthesis of conscious states. Accordingly, it is only doing justice to Kant when stress is laid upon corollaries to his doctrine, even if he himself was not

conscious of such consequences. It is not sufficient, therefore, to say that the spontaneity of mind exhausts itself in the application of forms to the data *somehow* given by sense. This "somehow" has been implicitly eliminated by Kant himself—nay, he has himself proved by implication that there is no absolute division between sense and understanding. "What Kant really proves is that the categories, so far as they are 'species of apperception,' or expressions of the different *momenta* in the pure consciousness of self, must necessarily be at the same time the guiding principles in all the different stages of our consciousness of a world, the knowledge of which can be completed only when it is brought into the form of self-consciousness—*i.e.*, when the external or material world is recognised as in reality a spiritual world, as the phenomenon of which the spiritual world is the noumenon."¹ Experience, accordingly, does not consist of a junction of elements contributed from various quarters. It is essentially due to mind, which transforms everything to its own uses. Further, the materials which may be *said* to be transformed are only known as transformed. Subject, that is, cannot be taken from object, nor object from subject. Our knowledge, if it contain sense-elements, contains them because they are already categorised; our knowledge, if it possess categories, has them because they have already received exemplification in relation to "matter of sense." Sense and understanding are invariably linked together; the one apart from the other is a pure abstraction. By the very fact that sense can be called sense, it is not sense, and so too with the understanding. To attempt to separate them is much as if one were to try to jump out of

¹ *Loc. cit.*, vol. i. p. 429.

his own skin in order to get a better view of it. And, as there cannot ultimately be any division between presumed matter of sense and presumed forms of the mind, so the opposition, contemplated by Kant, between consciousness of self and consciousness of objects is without ground. It is an obvious invention. Just as the transcendental ego, which cannot be made an object of thought, is *a* thought of the ego, just as the thing-in-itself, which cannot be known by the ego, is part of the ego's knowledge, so the supposed opposition between self-consciousness and the consciousness of things is possible in thought only because an identity already subsists.

Kant's main difficulties are occasioned by this invention of his, the pre-conditions of which he never realised. One-half of experience is set by the ears with the other. But, unless both were in the same world to begin with, they could not thus be rendered antagonistic to each other. To be "less than kind" they must first be "more than kin." Consciousness of self posits consciousness of objects to its own completion and *vice versâ*. Man gradually comes to be acquainted with himself, just because he is in a world of objects. So, too, he gradually becomes cognisant of a world of objects, because he refers them to himself as *his* objects. The one consciousness is an accompaniment of the other, and, only as this is recognised, can they be regarded as in possible conflict. This truth always remains an *ideal* with Kant; nevertheless, it is true that he had an intuition of it. Metaphysically, man cannot bring the world in to himself; by an act of rational faith, he may, in the ethical sphere, rid himself of the resultant opposition. And it is well to note that this interpretation

is enforced by the hint that, otherwise, the Neo-Kantian conclusion is the only one possible. "The ultimate decision, therefore, as to the truth of the Kantian Criticism of Pure Reason, must turn upon the opposition of perception and conception, as factors which reciprocally imply, and yet exclude, each other. If thought in constituting knowledge or experience has to deal with something foreign to itself, something of an essentially different character from pure thought, there seems no escape from the Kantian paradox. . . . When there is something incommensurable in two quantitative terms, that have to be brought into relation with each other, the only possible result is an infinite series; and, for similar reasons, the combination of thought and perception in experience can never give a final answer in terms of thought."¹

As in the theoretical, so in the practical, consciousness, Kant sets out from "dualistic" premisses. Just as he draws a broad distinction between forms in the mind and matter received through the senses, so he separates between the spiritual form of the moral law—the Moral Imperative—and the passions or materials to which this law is to be applied. Consequently, as there is, in the 'Critique of Pure Reason,' an opposition between self-consciousness and consciousness of objects, so, in the 'Critique of Practical Reason,' there is a conflict between reason and passion, between the freedom of the self in its possible realisation of ideal ends and the natural obstacles to such progress. The metaphysical theory had its apparent weakness and its inner strength; so, too, the moral. Kant sets the con-

¹ *Loc. cit.*, vol. ii. pp. 140, 141.

sciousness of self as a free moral agent in opposition to the consciousness of limitations due to man's environment in nature. The result is that his moral theory has a subjective character. The free agent, finding himself externally circumscribed, falls back upon self, where he is in a region into which no troublesome elements can enter. This subjective view affects Kant's conception of morality, and modifies his theory of it, very largely. Thus, his idea of moral conduct is abstract; it may be capable of general application, it has no definite content. Morality is theoretically presented, but its positive place in common life does not appear. The supposed conflict between reason and passion leads to a negative, ascetic, or Stoic, scheme of moral obligation. Freedom, because of this subjectivity, is explained as the ability ideally to present high ends to ourselves; it is not accompanied by an assurance that we can actually realise them. Law is conceived too much in the way of compulsion. And, as a whole, the individualistic view of the moral consciousness is pushed to the obscuring of the social. But, notwithstanding all this, which appears on the surface of the 'Critique of Practical Reason,' Kant is better than his bare words. He is always trying to rid himself of his early conception of the opposition between moral freedom and natural compulsion. As in the intellectual life the separation between consciousness of self and consciousness of objects is possible only because of the implied unity of the two kinds of consciousness, so, in the moral life, the opposition between ideal and opportunity is recognisable only because the two are but different sides of the same personality. Desire and passion are desire and passion for

me only as they are *my* desire and *my* passion. That is, they have ceased to be external objects limiting me; having been taken up into my individuality, they are no more outer obstacles to progress, they are integral elements in an advance which is neither external wholly nor internal wholly, but which is both equally.

The implication of Kant's theory is, that the dualism on which he apparently insists must, in the nature of the case, be overcome. And when this is recognised, the difficulties, contradictions, and arbitrary divisions, which mar his ethics, begin to pass away. The moral life is to be viewed, not so much as a determination of the good will—a purely subjective principle—but as a gradual growth and revelation of the good character—a principle which is neither subjective nor objective, but which is from subjectivity, through objectivity, back to richer subjectivity. The moral law, no longer divorced from actual life, is brought down from the abstract sphere, and becomes an indwelling, self-manifesting *δύναμις*, which naturally energises in virtuous acts. The conflict between reason and passion being thus ended, the need for an ascetic or legal morality is removed. The passions, not being opposed to the will, do not require to be suppressed. They are transformed by a natural process into ministers of righteousness. Now, "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." Freedom, so far from being an inner power to contemplate ideals—which cannot be realised "because of the matter,"—is but another aspect of necessity. Necessities are transformed into opportunities for self-advancement. Kant represents the forces by which the self is determined as things external to it. But

the inner tendency of his thought is to surmount this external determination. For his great central doctrine of the spontaneity of mind implies, "that all the moments by which the consciousness of self is determined are really its *own* moments." Consequently, "from the point of view which we have now reached, we are able to see that the self-contradiction of the consciousness of freedom, in those earlier stages of its development, is the very means by which it is developed to a form in which the contradiction disappears." So, too, by a legitimate extension of Kant's own principles, his conception of law may be transformed—nay, he unconsciously works out this transformation for himself in large measure. Finally, when he comes to the question, "Are men isolated in their moral life?" his "answer is ambiguous," yet with an ambiguity which tends to pass away. For the return upon self caused, in Kantian theory, by the contradictions found in the world, is not an individualistic return, but is a recoil of self from surroundings in which it has already become partaker. The individual can no more be separated from society than desire can be divorced from reason, category from sense, perception from conception. The advance which we witness in the moral life is essentially from personality, through persons, back to transformed personality. Man, simply because he is man, finds not only that it is bad, but that it is impossible, for him to be alone.

The 'Critique of Judgment,' again, although not so distinctly included in the primal conception of his task as were the first two 'Critiques,' comes to occupy a most important place in the development of his thought. The 'Critique of Practical Reason,' with its absolute

separation between reason and passion, between the moral and the sensuous, seems to receive correction in Kant's theory of the beautiful. And the same may be said of the 'Critique of Pure Reason,' with its chasm between the forms of the mind and the matter of sense. Moreover, the conception of beauty, in Kant's view, brings with it the idea of purpose, but of purpose which is restricted to the subjective sphere. Any unity which mind can attach to its conception of the universe is a result of the power which man possesses of joining ultimately discordant elements. "Taking his stand on these presuppositions, Kant is unable to regard the Idea of organic unity,—the Idea of a unity of the universal and particular, or of a unity of thought and reality,—as anything but an abstract and empty ideal, a mere 'thought of which we have no conception,' a consciousness of something which we think only by abstracting from the conditions of our own understanding; though it is also a something which we are *obliged* to think in so far as we recognise these conditions as limits."¹ But here, as in the previous 'Critiques,' Kant is better than his literal statement. Self-consciousness, which actually has this conception of organic unity, is itself organic. And the great difficulty which it experiences in theorising the universe to itself is to explain, not the organic, but the inorganic. On further consideration, it soon appears that self-consciousness cannot be related to the inorganic without in a manner transforming it. Kant implicitly acknowledges that all the *means* whereby we determine objects as these or those objects—as different parts—are themselves integral portions of the unity of self-consciousness. The differences are knowable only on the

¹ *Loc. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 529.

presupposition of unity, and through the differences the unity is perceptible. The two are inseparable from one another. Viewed thus, the subjective value assigned to artistic taste receives new, and objective, content. "Perfect art again becomes nature."

Here, then, an elevation is reached which almost touches the high plane of religion. Generous impulse, although causing contradictions, is found to be not without value. The tendency to appreciate this truth led Kant at last to his 'Treatise on Religion within the Bounds of mere Reason,' which is to be regarded as an attempt "to connect his moral principles more closely with the Religion of Love." Here again, as in former works, there is a difference between letter and spirit. Literally God is used as a mechanism for the "combination of happiness and goodness." Implicitly Kant goes beyond this conception by introducing new doctrines which raise the question "whether in the alternation of concession and recoil, admissions and reservations, in which he has involved himself, Kant has not strained his principles to the breaking-point." Strictly, owing to his subjective view of the moral life, he is unable to see that the ideal to which man progresses is in God, and is, therefore, no longer subjective but social. Nevertheless, his whole drift is to break down this rigid wall of subjectivity, and to let self-consciousness flow over into the "external" world. That is to say, in religion the individual has an ideal which is not only *his*, but is possibly his, because it is God's, and therefore, everybody's. Self-sacrifice is thus installed as the sole motive-force of religion.

Thus, then, there is the literal Kant, throughout whose work one error, differing in matter but ever

the same in form, continually runs. On the other hand, there is the implicit Kant, who teaches us to correct this mistake,—the Kant who leads us to the realistic Idea which is the ground and guarantee of the being of individuals.

This Idea, then, as the contention seems to be, not only proceeds legitimately from the Kantian scheme, but illumines it in every direction. Viewed in certain aspects, this conclusion brings us singularly near to the starting-point of Schopenhauer's theories. For, first, the Idea is eminently a principle of evolution. But why should this evolution take place at all? If reason be a closed circle inclusive of everything from the beginning, for what cause should a process be indispensable to render the universe rational? This question, as the reply would stand, is best answered by keeping silence. The problem is not one that can properly be set, for the process already *is*. Yet Schopenhauer made bold to break this silence, working from Kant, and remembering to forget Hegel—although it might easily be shown by the unkind that he scarcely forgot Hegel's two immediate predecessors sufficiently for his own credit as an original thinker. The second difficulty which Schopenhauer's peculiar brand of monism was designed to obviate is, that an evolution of a realistic Universal or Absolute, mirrored in the face of nature and history, cannot but be, even at the end of its universality, so far, a puny manifestation of the ultimate reality. Indeed, were it true, it would almost amount to a confirmation of his alogical view, as the sardonic sage hinted. For progress through endless ages, taken at any given point, does no more than leave the realisation of the Infinite as

problematical as it was at the initiation of the process. To all intents the evolution is endless, and is, consequently, incapable of being rationalised, so far as we are concerned. At best, the identification of finite and infinite, which it presupposes, is no more than a figure of speech, as Schopenhauer points out. There is no corresponding reality as such. The sole defensible theory that can be deduced from Kant, accordingly, is that, as man never tastes perfection, but remains always and everywhere imperfect, the world lies under the compulsion of some irrational Power. It goes on, may be, but it does not proceed in any accountable fashion.

IV. Schopenhauer's Realism.

Schopenhauer claims to be, not simply a Kantian, but the only true Kantian. The conclusions of the Critical philosophy *par excellence*—that is, of the first two portions of the 'Critique of Pure Reason'—are accepted by him, elaborated with greater consistency, and finally made the starting-point for a new and sufficient explanation of all things. What may be called the realistic tendency in Kant is developed to extremes by Schopenhauer. While the former, by employing a new method, had analysed the nature, and very particularly the limits, of knowledge, the latter, with a certain faithfulness to this method, received the account of the nature of knowledge, but refused to rest satisfied with the limits put upon thought. The unknowable of pure thought, reached at the end of the 'Critique of Pure Reason,' does not impress him with awe any more than the unknowable thing-in-itself, assumed, at the beginning, to be the source of subjective

sense-impressions. Like Fichte, Schopenhauer desired to have philosophy "in one piece." He was a realist in the mediæval sense, or, as we moderns term it, often loosely, I think, a monist. For him the world must needs be explained by reference to a single principle which, while itself retaining complete unity, subsumes all differences. Consequently Schopenhauer could not rest content with Kant's ultimate dualism. And, being from the first furnished with the transcendental method, he did not find it difficult so to transform the Kantian philosophy, and so to supplement it from other sources, that a sufficiently striking, if scarcely tenable, theory of the universe resulted.

The originality of Schopenhauer's work—and he was in places undeniably original—lies principally in the provision he makes for remedying the defects of Kant which, on some interpretations of his thought, force themselves upon our attention. If it be held that the aim of Kant's work is simply "to determine objects as they really are, by abstracting from those elements in our first consciousness of them which hinder it from corresponding to the reality," then the necessity for Schopenhauer's interference becomes very easy of apprehension. For, if such be Kant's desire, then the reduction of knowledge, according to his plan, to "subjective forms of perception and conception leaves us with the idea of a thing-in-itself, which can be determined by neither; and even this thing-in-itself is only the correlate of the consciousness of self, and we cannot regard it as more than a 'problematical conception,' which has no reality apart from consciousness."¹ Schopenhauer's two main objects were to show, first, that there is an

¹ E. Caird, *loc. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 153.

absolute distinction between phenomena and the thing-in-itself, and to prove conclusively that knowledge is confined to the former solely; and, second, having thus rendered it impossible to explain the thing-in-itself by reference either to perception or conception—that is, by consideration of experience as we know it—to discover the noumenon in some principle exterior to, yet determinative of, knowledge.

It may be allowed at the outset that Schopenhauer's examination of Kant, by means of which he further develops and enforces the views expressed in the systematic parts of 'The World as Will and Vorstellung,' is much the most subtle, and in many respects conclusive, criticism to which the transcendental method has been subjected. In some ways it is intended to render Kant more consistent with himself, in others it is an attack on what are held to be his errors. The fundamental assumption, on which the whole argument proceeds, is the distinction between phenomena and the thing-in-itself. In other words, Schopenhauer gives Kant the greatest praise for his laborious analysis of the realistic element in thought, but condemns him for his inability to use this element as a final explanation of all the rest. "*Cogito, ergo est.*" This is Schopenhauer's conclusion, derived from the line of argument adopted in the 'Critique of Pure Reason.' If time and space be merely subjective, according to the "great achievement" of the 'Æsthetic,' they have no application to absolute realities. The general conditions of perception, that is, are characteristics of the percipient; they have no essential relation with the perceived. The *a priori* perceptions are, in Schopenhauer's estimation—and it is a legitimate one—deprived of their

outwardness, and are shown to be accompaniments of experience derived from mind itself. The categories, again—the pure *a priori* conceptions—“are by their very nature nothing more than mental forms.” Their subjectivity is the condition of their existence. Kant’s examination of experience is thus far made to prove that mind is a kind of mill, the mechanism of which consists in the categories, and space and time. The latter bit of the machinery is in a manner invisible, the former is not. Sense impressions—the *a posteriori* perceptions—bring grist to this mill, and knowledge is ground out. But sensation is to all intents and purposes nothing until brought definitely under one of the categories, and set in the general forms of space and time. Something—the self, namely—stands still amid the multiplicity of the manifold and sets this in order. From the nature of the case, however, we can know only what is set in order. All knowledge is consequently phenomenal. My mind *makes* phenomena for me, my neighbour’s mind *makes* phenomena for him. Nor can we regard this simply as an unknowable function whence proceeds the power of *making*. For there is also an unknowable source whence the materials are derived to be used in this construction. Knowledge is surrounded by reality both on the subjective and on the objective sides, but it can never include anything real. Kant’s analysis of experience, therefore, results in the conclusion that object and subject are inseparable—that is, objectivity as such and subjectivity as such can never be known. There are real objects and real egos, but they occupy a sphere which our faculties cannot pierce. There is a noumenal ego and a phenomenal ego. There is a real

thing and a phenomenal thing. In both cases experience is necessarily confined to the latter. Kant's master discovery was the distinction between the two: he made its absoluteness a certainty.

Schopenhauer's interpretation of Kant may therefore be summarised somewhat as follows. The world is my representation. To declare that an object exists "on its own account" in separation from my thought is an absurdity. To say that my selfhood exists apart from objects in relation to which it makes itself known is, in the same way, impossible. Experience is, therefore, neither of mind nor of matter, but of representations—*Vorstellungen*—which may be referred, if we so choose, to one or to the other. A more drastic system of nihilism could not be devised. The principal reflection induced by it has been vividly stated in Hume's celebrated words: "I am first affrighted and confounded with that forlorn solitude, in which I am placed in my philosophy, and fancy myself some strange uncouth monster, who, not being able to mingle and unite in society, has been expelled all human commerce, and left utterly abandoned and disconsolate. Fain would I run into the crowd for shelter and warmth, but cannot prevail with myself to mix with such deformity. I call upon others to join me, in order to make a company apart; but no one will hearken to me. Every one keeps at a distance, and dreads that storm, which beats upon me from every side."¹

This doctrine of Schopenhauer's, however different, both in form and in apparent conclusion, from the classical theory of transcendentalism, involves, as may be noted in passing, a similar assumption. His dogma,

¹ Works (Green's ed.), vol. i. p. 544.

of no subject without an object and *vice versa*, is but another way of saying that relation constitutes reality. This, on certain interpretations of it, is an implication of the dialectic method of Hegel, and, in its tendency to subordinate or annihilate the self-containedness and substantiality of the actual object, it has contributed, not only to produce the unbelief out of which pessimism has grown, but also to force philosophy into the false position of seeming to *create*, rather than to explain, the world. It cannot be too often insisted, in view of such inferences, that a relation is only possible between factors which are not constituted exclusively by it. In other words, the relation accompanies the objects, and is not productive of them, as Schopenhauer intends. According to his method, which is that of all-inclusive realism, an abstract principle is rendered responsible for reality, in flagrant contradiction of the fact that this very principle is itself a generalisation derived from an already existent cosmos.

This doctrine, however, as will appear immediately, occupies a most important place in Schopenhauer's speculation, for it very largely determines his review of Kant. The main difficulty of Kant's theory of the categories, as has often been shown, is that no reason can be readily assigned why the right form should be applied by mind to any particular group of given sense impressions. So far as his analysis goes, the restraining or directing force, which could guarantee that causality, say, and not any other category, would be correctly forthcoming, is conspicuous by its absence. Whether Schopenhauer perceived this quite plainly or not, he brushed aside the difficulty, mainly because it hindered his own progress. His criticism of Kant con-

sists principally in his attack upon the table of the categories. He pokes a deal of fun at the master's love of architectonic symmetry. Why should there be twelve categories rather than one hundred and twenty? why should they be divided into four classes rather than into forty? There is no special reason. But Kant was fascinated by the analogy from Formal Logic, and tried to run his metaphysic along parallel lines, as it were. The table of the categories, therefore, has no foundation in fact. It was simply adopted without sufficient inquiry. The same may be said of the four groups into which the twelve categories are equally divided. Nor, further, is there any proof that these four correspond precisely to the four forms of Pure Judgment. Schopenhauer, accordingly, rids himself of the difficulty respecting "objective" and "subjective" judgment, incident to Kant's explanation of experience, by reducing the twelve categories to one root-form. He points out, in defence of this procedure, that Kant's list of the categories is dependent upon a false psychology. One of the most acute and important among Schopenhauer's objections is precisely this. He considers that the distinction between *Verstand* and *Vernunft*, of which later realists made so much capital, is ill-founded. It implies that man has a special faculty of the absolute, and that he uses this peculiar power to reduce the differences of the universe to unity. But, while Schopenhauer cannot admit that Reason has a power of "second sight," denied to Understanding, he does not wholly abolish the distinction between the two. He rather alters the scope of both, and, thereafter, causes them to play a most important part in the development of his *Weltanschauung*. Reason

with him is the power of apprehending concepts, which man alone among the animals possesses. Concepts are general notions incapable of being concretely imaged, but furnishing the means whereby thought conjoins many things in one idea. Reason, in other words, is the faculty which refers individuals to their proper classes, or naturally elucidates what is involved in their general conception. It deals unavoidably with abstractions. Understanding, on the contrary, has exclusive connection with individual things and their relations to one another. This capacity is not pre-eminently human; all animals possess it. They, like man, can cognise causes and effects, can observe that this object now and here present stands in a certain relation to another object or series of objects. The Understanding, therefore, is the mental source to which Schopenhauer's one category must be referred. In its perception of causes and effects it converts sensations into phenomena at a stroke. The amendment of Kant thus effected results as follows. It is ridiculous to allege that the twelve categories can be constitutive of knowledge. They inhere in Reason. But Reason is the faculty of concepts—that is, the capacity which connects “intuitions” according to their common elements by the aid of class notions. But the latter depend for their being upon the former. On the other hand, Understanding is the faculty of concrete things. It is the power which renders the world real for man and beast alike. In short, it is the faculty of representation. The human mind has, no doubt, the power of reasoning. But this is consequent upon representation. Understanding, then, is more important for our present inquiry. And one must note that its opera-

tion is necessary to the being of objects. There is no object without self. Further, Understanding cannot work in a vacuum; it represents intuitions. There is no self without an object. Understanding reveals its existence in the representing of phenomena. This, in effect, is Schopenhauer's deduction from Kant, and he enforces it by a new analysis—already worked out some seven years before his complete Kantian criticism—of the Principle of Sufficient Reason.

If it be true, Schopenhauer argues, that all *Vorstellungen* must be my objects, and that all objects must be my *Vorstellungen*, it cannot but be concluded that all representations are connected with each other. No one of them subsists by itself, but rather is determined absolutely by the place which it is *forced* to hold in a representational order. This dogma reveals the immense importance unavoidably attached by Schopenhauer to the solipsism respecting relation noticed above.¹ Our experience is real, has being, because it consists of *necessarily related* representations. This he explains, in his doctoral essay, 'The Fourfold Root,' and enforces once and again in his principal work. It issues in his substitution of the one great category of cause and effect, in its various forms, for the semi-logical table sketched by Kant.

Schopenhauer thus rids himself of Kant's theoretical difficulties by reducing all the categories to one, and by restricting its operation entirely to the subjective sphere. The relation between subject and object cannot be discussed under the category of cause and effect, for this is applicable only to phenomena. The thing-in-itself is free from the dominion of causality, and must

¹ Cf. p. 196.

accordingly be approached by some other means. Without attempting a *résumé* of Schopenhauer's analysis of causality, let us for a moment look at its implications. His first position—and it is common to an entire modern school—is that the knowledge consists of *Vorstellungen*. What I am able to represent to myself is experience. The subjective idealism, of which Hegel accused Kant, is here stated in its baldest form. The bolts are, as it were, withdrawn from the unity of experience as a whole,—nay, even the individual mind is bereft of its orderliness. Schopenhauer does his best to remain faithful to this abstract subjectivism throughout his speculation. But for him, as for every thinker who adopts it, the position proves essentially untenable. For, once demonstrated, philosophy should thereupon stop short, having committed suicide with skill and decency. Schopenhauer, however, great even in his main inconsistencies, passes from extreme nominalism to a realism as extreme. He effects the passage by way of his doctrine of cause. In the first place, he is no less hampered than was Kant by the question of *given* sensations. These are not self-caused, and they form a great part of the “stock in trade” of Understanding as distinguished from Reason. When he comes to explain the unity of experience, he finds it necessary to allege that sensation cannot be satisfactorily theorised save by a species of externalisation. He gives up his unalloyed phenomenalism, and boldly declares that, in order to read a meaning into sensation, man must connect it with some outer cause. On his premisses, such a cause cannot exist. But, granting that it did, he immediately finds himself in a dilemma. Either the sensations are known in repre-

sensation before they are referred to this cause, or they are not. If the former, then the sensations, being already objects of representation, do not need to be so referred. If the latter, then phenomena are brought causally into connection with the unphenomenal; and this is as absurd as the procedure of Kant. The roundly condemned tendencies of the Dialectic are repeated. It need hardly be added that Schopenhauer extricates himself from this difficulty when he introduces Will. His theory of the body as an "immediate object," which is characteristic of his doctrine of Will, affords him a loophole of escape, albeit one to which he has no title. Be this as it may, the point to be noted is, that progress has already begun from extreme nominalism towards the final realism. Having, like all absolutists, enthroned the subject, he gradually proceeds to extend its power, so that at length it comes to be coextensive with the universe. The creature is in process of being erected into the creator, and this by the nature and operation of causality.

The second step is taken when Schopenhauer proceeds to a further explanation of the meaning of cause. He abuses Kant, and seeks to convict him of inconsistency, because, having first declared that causality is a mental form, and therefore applicable to phenomena only, he went on to apply it to the relation between sensations and the thing-in-itself. But to say that cause fits phenomena alone is to make a statement which mind, by its very constitution, cannot but contradict. Accordingly, we find Schopenhauer falling into exactly the same error as Kant. As we saw before, causality is an accompaniment of the representations which are the sum and substance of knowledge. Their nature

is to be determined by relationship to one another; they are members of a fixed order ruled by cause and effect. The Understanding, because it is Understanding, insists that every present representation — *i.e.*, every change—should have a sufficient reason in past representation. But all this itself presupposes change. Whence, then, this change of which causality is but the attachment?

Here Schopenhauer breaks through his first limits, and urges that change, the basis of causality, is due to the operation of some power. Causality, in short, leads to the boundaries of its own kingdom, and then tells us that it is dependent for its very being upon the “No Man’s Land” beyond. It affirms its own limits and denies them in the same breath. Representation, with its chain of determined changes, is broken through, and once more we are brought face to face with a universal power beyond. In other words, the series of changes known to us *quâ* representations is itself caused—or something similar to *caused*—by a Force which is not subject to causality. Schopenhauer repeats the error of which he has convicted Kant, but in a new way. He is compelled to do this, because otherwise he would have made every individual the determination of a special kind of causality. He escapes the dilemma by means of the well-known sophism that “one who believes that he alone exists is not to be found outside bedlam.” No doubt this is very true. But Schopenhauer forgets that he is here doing precisely what Kant did, though with one essential difference. The noumenal cause to which Kant ultimately referred phenomena was rational, Schopenhauer’s is irrational. He gets out, in short, from a purely logical

representationalism to a purely alogical realism. And, armed with this Something, that can do anything, he has little difficulty in conjuring up a world which, because a creation, not an explanation, is the most outrageous among "states" ideal or other. The truth is, that whenever he finds himself face to face with concrete reality, he discovers that representationalism is inadequate. He therefore rushes to the other extreme, and assumes an arbitrary principle, which he can employ at pleasure to force the realities to take their "proper" places in the new order. This forms the true essence of his "monistic" realism. Its practical value is, that it constitutes a *reductio ad absurdum* of all attempts to treat the universe purely *a priori*. The facts are "chiels that winna ding." Or, bringing the matter to a point, the law of causality is merely a mental necessity indispensable to our representing a concatenated world to ourselves. But it, in turn, leads beyond these representations to real forces. These forces, or some one Force supreme among them, control the universe; and, if this one Force can be discovered, philosophy is in a position to dictate its own terms to the cosmos. In any case, the philosopher in question very plainly adopts this attitude.

Thus, despite all his protestations, Schopenhauer, like Kant, has not only a thing-in-itself, but also a noumenon, which he relates to phenomena causally. It is the reason for the existence of these phenomena. Where he differs most deeply from his predecessor, and carries out his conclusions to the extremest realism, is in his determination of the nature and overt action of the Kantian inexplicable. Or, as he himself puts it, Kant assumes the thing-in-itself; *I* explain it, and deduce from it a

world-theory, into which facts must fit, if they have any self-respect. The series of leaps whereby he arrives at universal alogical Will, as the true thing-in-itself, has frequently been noted, and need not be detailed again. It must, however, be pointed out that, as a first principle, unconscious Will is a gross imposture, and that the method whereby its operation is everywhere detected is arbitrary in the extreme. We may look at each in turn.

Matter, or the world as we know it, is, as many have argued, identical with force. Schopenhauer adds, by way of ampler explanation, that force is identical with Will. The cardinal position of this doctrine lies in the complete disjunction of Will from any species of consciousness; it is distinctively non-ethical. There are several ways in which one might show that such a conception furnishes no sufficient first principle. One criticism, derived from Schopenhauer himself, may suffice here. He posits a blind Will,—one, therefore, which manifests itself anywhere and anyhow. In the course of the discussion, however, he finds that it is revealed in all regions—inorganic, organic, conscious, and self-conscious. The single circumstance which appeals to him above every other is that all phenomena are subject to laws. These laws differ in various spheres, the phenomena are what they are in virtue of them; and in them precisely the operation of Will is traceable. In other words, whatever is orderly, designed, rational, may be led as evidence of the energising of a disorderly, irrational, and alogical Power. Briefly, Schopenhauer constantly uses Will in two different connotations. When he is putting the case before us, intelligence is subsumed under it; when he is boldly

revealing the ultimate in the universe, this same intelligence finds no place. What better is this than baby's game of hide-and-seek, where all the fun is that the child has witnessed the hiding, and therefore knows where to find his playmate.

But, secondly, when this conveniently elastic Will has been procured, Schopenhauer uses it with the greatest freedom to mould the facts. His Will is truly "insatiable." Does a stone tend towards the earth? does the sphere of this planet move through space? does the daisy open or close, and the oak put forth leaves or shed acorns? does the glowworm shine, or do lions struggle over their prey? do men and nations declare to fight? does one person need more sleep than another? does loss of memory fail to destroy personality? does knowledge grow and goodness tarry? do men of genius die young? do some men prefer to shave? do women arrive at intellectual maturity soon and then stop short? does politeness imply that "esteem is extended to the unworthy"? does the artist live momentarily in another world? does every motive imply want and pain?—in short, can any question be asked about anything "on the earth, or in the heavens above, or in the waters beneath the earth"—the single explanation is the operation of Will. No matter what the thing be, no matter what plain account of its own nature it may be able to furnish, no matter whether its being embosom a standing contradiction of the one great principle, it must be tortured, twisted, or whittled away, that it may fit its finitude to this infinity. Schopenhauer approaches facts with a certain formula; and woe to them if they do not at once submit. If they happen to afford any favourable evidence, they

are welcomed ; if refractory, but indispensable, they are altered "to suit" ; if troublesome, and therefore of little apparent moment, they are at once dismissed with the contempt which they have so richly deserved. This contempt, it may be noted in passing, is an oft-used weapon with Schopenhauer and his kind ; and that this should be so is not without significance. His extraordinary pretensions, his vulgar intolerance, above all, his collection of "evidences," culled from every imaginable quarter, and often bearing abundant testimony to his lack of accuracy, are thoroughly characteristic. There never was a more representative example of the redaction of facts at their own expense, and in the interests of a principle. The historical value of the system culminates in this. It has shown, with remarkable success, that a mixture of personal bias—towards a certain first principle—and of philosophical interest—in "proofs" of selected instances—is the most dangerous, as it is the most deceptive, form of metaphysical inquiry. It breeds a finality which is final only in incompleteness, an empiricism which is void of disinterested study of phenomena, a system which professes to unlock all the secret chambers of the universe by a flourish of formulæ.

The secret of Schopenhauer's speculation, if secret it have, centres in his passage from extreme nominalism—the legitimate outcome of his presentationism—to extreme realism, the equally inevitable deduction from his conception of Will. This transition is rendered possible by the factor common to both standpoints. Schopenhauer's presentationism and his doctrine of Will are equally anthropological. That everything, humanly speaking, must be known in terms of ideas, is a conclusion which cannot be disputed, because it cannot be

disproved. That everything, humanly speaking, must be done by indwelling will-power, is, similarly, obvious enough. But, even at this, humanity is not explained. Yet Schopenhauer, employing now one element, now another, attempts to unravel the tangled skein of existence. When he applies to the former principle for aid, he falls into nominalism; but this is only a species of introduction. When he trusts to the latter—and this is the whole trend of his speculation—his tendency is realistic. He isolates one element from the life of man, and assuming that a characteristic of humanity furnishes a formula sufficient for the comprehension of the world as a whole, he proceeds to explain it by means of this single, abstract factor. The assumption itself traverses all science, which would see man in the light of his place in nature; all theology, which would regard man as he stands related to God; all philosophy, which would estimate man's life in itself and as it is connected with the universe as a totality, the natural, moral, and spiritual spheres being integral parts of a larger whole. Further, Schopenhauer, not content with this, fixes on a part only of his assumption, and fancying himself fully equipped, proceeds from the analogy of *abstract* human will to construct both things seen and things eternal. As a result, we have set before us, with singular objective perfection, the innate movement of an absolute system. Will, no doubt, takes the place of an Absolute Ego, of a *Neutrum*, of an Idea. And although it cannot be said that mere cognition, according to a principle of thought which is the precondition of all experience, is identified with, and substituted for, actual concrete things, a simple alteration of terms meets the case.

Will, which sustains both knowledge and existence, is constantly appealed to as the foundation of everything. Schopenhauer fails to distinguish between the individuals and the principle. As it grows they fade continually. It takes the place of the presented facts, and after this identification, one can easily show that the principle is in—the facts. Sophism has been substituted for sober philosophical analysis, with the result that everything is constructed out of nothing, and so nothing is explained. Will is the absolute process, and the absolute process is the factual world. Very true. But to ring the changes on two specious phrases is not to account for this universe.

The realistic tendency, implicit in the critical philosophy and explicit in the Kantian school, was thus pushed to extremes by Schopenhauer, in whose view the world *must* be theorised by reference to a single principle which, while itself remaining one, subsumes all differences. A redaction of experience is undertaken in the interests of the principle. The world is declared to be “my representation”; to say that an object exists “on its own account” apart from any thought is an absurdity. Reality is completely conditioned by, if not identified with, this relation. Objects, in other words, have been deprived of their self-containedness and substantiality, and have been transformed into products of a certain relation. Or, to put it otherwise, an abstract principle has been saddled with responsibility for the existence of realities. But to become possessed of the secret involved in the ultimate nature of this principle is, at the same time, to be placed in a position to dictate terms to the cosmos. “The world is my representation,” yet not

mine only; for, "one who believes that he alone exists is not to be found out of bedlam." Accordingly, while the law of causality is merely a mental necessity indispensable to our *representation* of a concatenated world to ourselves, it at once leads beyond the representation to *real* forces, or to some single force, which controls the universe. Leagued with this power, the philosopher, if he be so minded, can easily "remove mountains and set them in the midst of the sea." Schopenhauer's system, and all its kind, however, have a certain positive value. They serve to illustrate the grave defect of a method that exalts synthesis at the expense of analysis. In view of the vast extension of the field of knowledge in recent times, it is more than ever necessary to insist upon the analytic side of philosophic discipline. New materials are continually being found in the sphere of concrete fact by the special sciences and by the distinctively analytic departments of philosophy. To appreciate, much more to appraise, these, a nominalistic attitude must be adopted. On the other hand, all such details imply specific first principles. These are brought into prominence when the thinker applies synthetic processes to the facts in an attempt to spell out rational order. This, in turn, is the realistic element. Neither avails without the other. In English thought the former has predominated, in Kant and modern speculation the latter, while in Berkeley, as we have tried to show, both are present in a species of *implicit* unity. His interest at the present juncture is that he tries to rationalise the facts on their own terms.

V. Conclusion.

Proceeding to gather up the strands of this limited discussion, it may be said that not a little can be learned, for present use, from the historical development, after Berkeley, through Kant to Schopenhauer. A few points may be instanced at a venture. As opposed to later tendencies, Berkeley's first philosophical efforts brace the individual to regard himself as possessed of an imperishable personality all his own. He is not to be reduced to a mechanism for the fixing of sensations, nor to a series of relations emanating from an absolute process, nor to a simple incident in the insatiable striving of a blind will. Egoity is neither a phenomenon nor an idea. Individuality is not an accident nor an illusion, but the condition of every act of knowledge. It is more than a mere accompaniment of objective consciousness, and therefore is capable of being known definitely, not, as Kant sometimes leads us to suppose, only with a certain vagueness. Berkeley will not have personality exploited either by association or by an interpenetrative principle void of individuality. His doctrine of causality, accordingly, to take an example, is exactly the reverse of Schopenhauer's. Causality is not of phenomena only, but is a *real* result of noumenal action. No object of sense is capable of rising to the dignity of a cause; it must, by its own nature, ever be an effect. "The material world contains substances and causes only in a figurative way." If Berkeley does not work out his theory fully,—if he assumes too much, and attaches undue importance to the revelation contained in this assumption,—he is, at

the same time, proceeding in the right direction. Causality is not a bare category immanent in the mind, nor is it a simple form. It is closely connected with ultimate reality as such. The fundamental mistake respecting Berkeley, which so many later thinkers have made—not excepting his learned German editor¹—consists in a misapprehension of his conception of cause, and of its bearing upon his theory of matter.

He is not a representationist, like Schopenhauer, as some few would have us suppose. He does not declare that we can possess a knowledge only of states of our own consciousness. But he points out, that in virtue of the operation of noumena *quâ* cause or causes, our ideas of a cosmos, with their causal references, become possible. Ueberweg's question about the Herculanean MSS. is not germane to the discussion. For "things" are not dependent upon our imperfect conceptions, but *are*, and are themselves interdependent parts of our world, because they ever bear a meaning for our perception, which is itself derived from some noumenal personality. This last is the realistic element in Berkeley. Certainly, in his pronounced early nominalism, of which he never shook himself entirely free, he renders the noumenal conclusion difficult of demonstration.² His frequent polemic against "abstract" as distinct from "perceived" ideas, limits him in a certain manner. But this only renders more impressive the lesson to be learned from him. What he hinted at—an organic relation between the nominalistic and the realistic elements—is now a chief, if not the chief, *desideratum* of philosophy. His very deficiencies on the realistic

¹ Ueberweg.

² Cf., *e.g.*, Essay towards a New Theory of Vision, sects. 122, 123.

side show us this. The ethical defect of Berkeleyanism, which does not furnish adequate ground for the supremacy of God in moral judgment; its inability to say plainly how "things exist in the eternal mind"; and above all, perhaps, its imperfect presentation of the rational order of knowledge—these leave half-formulated, and almost wholly unanswered, just those problems to which speculation has been addressing itself since Kant. But while he only points the way here, Berkeley has elsewhere given guidance which has not been laid to heart. His nominalistic tendencies, combined with what may be called his realistic aspirations, contain not merely a problem, but also hints of a method. The task of philosophy pre-eminently is, while remaining faithful to the facts (sensations), to account for, explain, in short, to rationalise, the laws in obedience to which these sensations become the ordered universe of thoughts and things. It is hardly sufficient to declare either that mind arrives at a "full chaos" provided with certain forms, and by their aid cuts off a part from chaos for behoof of cosmos, or that a blind principle fashions by its blundering the universe of our knowledge. It cannot be admitted that facts are flung out by a machinery of principles. The world must be allowed to speak for itself, as, according to Berkeley's method, it always is. At the same time, and on the other side, his acceptance of the Leibnitian formula has to be remembered. He lays stress on the *nisi intellectus ipse*—"in which the universals of reasons are recognised as constituents of knowledge, and of which modern German philosophy is a development. The *tabula rasa*¹ of Aristotle is

¹ Selections, p. 377.

not inconsistent with the *potential* existence of his forms."

Schopenhauer's aggressive monism, while open to conclusive criticism on several sides, is of considerable value as what may be termed an irritant. Re-examination of speculative presuppositions is its inevitable effect. Will had been slighted, and revenge had to be executed on Reason. The whole question of the nature of the one immanent principle is raised over again. What, then, of presuppositions? There is a sense, in which it may be learned from Berkeley, that a "presuppositionless" philosophy is out of the question. The thinker believes, to use Lotze's phrase, in "the existence in the world at large of a 'truth' which affords a sure object for cognition," and no amount of subtle jugglery with words will ever take him behind this belief. Man, by the very fact that he philosophises, approves his own faculty. And one part of philosophical method consists in a painstaking and patient analysis of the concrete things which go to constitute the "truth" immediately apprehended by reason. Philosophy, if it is to have its feet upon the solid earth, cannot but attempt to reaffirm the convictions of the "ordinary consciousness" by experimental treatment of the external order. This is indispensable to the end that the postulate of the general "rightness" of reason may be proved to have foundation in *reality*. By analysis, philosophy is bound to give an exhaustive account of that "common-sense" which is "common," because possessed by all men, and which is "sense," because accepted by all as conclusive evidence. It has to "dissect out," as it were, the factual truths, and the relations to universal law, which lie embedded

in the experience of "the man in the street." And here the second presupposition of metaphysical procedure emerges.

To the being of a metaphysical scheme, conviction of the substantial unity of the universe is necessary. The principle that the thinker seeks to find by a synthesis, which he superimposes upon his analysis, is not a mere thing in the air. It is a principle of rationality in the ultimate reality of which he believes. Otherwise he would not set forth on his quest. No system has ever fully presented the nature of this principle. But this does not alter the circumstance that no system would ever have been brought to birth were the existence of ultimate reality not constituted the presupposition. It is not within the bounds of possibility to start from "pure thought." The world and the things thereof form the path along which the thinker must travel to the verification, partial and largely tentative, of that conviction of unity in the universe with which he inevitably sets out. It will not suffice to substitute belief in unity for the actual fact. But the ideal of faith, as informed by an intuition characteristic of the very being of reason, has to be gradually built into experienced reality by a synthetic grasping of concrete elements, over which mastery has been gained in the process of analytical consideration. The details, that is, receive treatment on their own terms, because recognised to be formative factors in the whole of knowledge. The implicit truth of Kant's phrase, "conceptions without perceptions are blind," demands explicit attention. The *right* which the philosopher can thus claim has little in common with the dogmatic imposition of a cast-iron system. He can only ask time for analysis, and demand

absolute freedom to investigate all matters for himself. This, in one aspect of it, is what remains to us of the Kantian theory. Schopenhauer has proved to demonstration that there has been too much playing at making worlds.

The nominalist trend of recent reflection is not without significance, and not without hope for the future of philosophical inquiry. Much patient listening to man and nature is necessary, not merely to advance in positive science, but also to progress towards adequacy in treatment of first principles. No doubt, this does not, and cannot, supply all the conditions requisite. The separate incidents of observation must truly be permitted to speak for themselves, but they need to be supplied with a certain kind of hearing. Spiritual things are discerned only of spiritual men. Some are fitter to pursue analysis than to carry out constructive synthesis. The fashion has long too exclusively been to set the one endowment over against the other. In a manner, no doubt, they are hardly complementary. Analysis may to some extent proceed by itself, paying little heed to its presuppositions, but synthesis cannot so work. The patience of the former and the insight of the latter are equally requirements of a vindicable or organic philosophy. On the whole, modern speculation has been too little content to let wisdom linger, and, as a result, patience is not always conspicuous. The deduction has failed with Schopenhauer, because the analysis, warped by a preconception, was often void of discernment; with Hegel, because, limited by a process, research directed itself too exclusively to illustrations presumed favourable. It is often said, disparagingly, that we have been doing

no more than looking at aspects of Kantian or Hegelian thought, or that we have been grappling with problems already solved. But to a certain point, the more independent study of these aspects the better. To-day we meet indeed the same problems, but cannot rest satisfied with the same solutions. The form of the Hegelian dialectic, to take an instance, cannot meanwhile be fitted to the multiplicity of ascertained phenomena, except at the price of gravest omissions. Upon Kant and his successors present toilers for "the spiritually indispensable" lean. But knowledge has extended enormously in the interval, and the new materials must be grasped in detail ere a further synthesis germane to present wants—and aspirations, if you choose—can emerge. The wonderful diffusion of mediæval philosophy constituted a testimony to its adequacy for the time being, which it were well to ponder deeply. For, as Trendelenburg has admirably said: "Philosophy is unable to regain its past power till it acquires permanence; and it cannot achieve permanence until it progresses in the same manner as the other sciences—that is, until it develops continuously, not beginning and ending in every head, but historically laying hold of the problems and unfolding them." Beholden to the past thinkers must certainly be, seeing that from it their education and equipment largely proceed. But the present supplies its own difficulties, and to meet these, not systems, but the world and its facts, need to be examined. Because man is a "divided being," his reflection cannot but be rational as well as empirical, yet empirical as well as speculative. Philosophy may be, and may always have been, a "science of concepts." But concepts are generalisations from intuitions of concrete reality. In this is summed,

so to speak, the double method essential to progress. Berkeley's main want, probably, was method; but even thus he hinted at it in many ways. More recent thought, particularly in certain schools, has been cursed with too much method. There is now need that industry should be set in place of ingenuity. The sciences to-day solicit, and the historical course of philosophy enforces, a kind of reflection which will satisfactorily approach towards an acceptable synthesis of the truths ascertained both in the material sphere of

- the outer world and in the ideal realms of the moral and religious consciousness.

Monism, in some form or another, is doubtless the goal of modern thought. But it has already been tried, and its results have proved sufficiently disastrous. Why, then, do we tend to adopt it? It is to be borne in mind, with Berkeley, that, whatever our theories or methods, the problem of philosophy is the Absolute. To see all things in relation to God, and as connected with what may be provisionally called God's moral government of the universe, is the ideal. There is a large measure of faith in philosophising. For, although many questions defy our best efforts, and although the attempted rebuilding of the universe to our own souls is always inadequate, the very fact that the problems exist, and the very truth that there is a universe—not a chaos—irresistibly brings home certain convictions. Taking life at its highest worth for me as a person, accepting the "music of the spheres" as musical for me, I must invariably, if in the widest sense, declare, *Credo ut intelligam*. This faith indeed it is which causes the mutual recriminations too common among thinkers. The truth is that,

as it becomes wider, the world of persons and things discloses deeper meaning; and as this meaning is, by care and faithfulness, more fully fathomed, conviction receives ampler justification. So intimately is this faith of reason bound up with speculation, that it may be dogmatically said, if a man be uncertain about God he cannot be sure about anything. Psychology itself, in so far as it forms the necessary prelude to philosophical investigation, bears witness to this. For it implies, not simply self-reflection and experiment upon the bodily organism, but also appreciation of the past, belief in what mental activity has already accomplished. It presupposes, that is, an order ruled by mind, which is not of individual creation; nay, in such an order is the pledge of its existence no less than the voucher for its value. The problem of thought cannot be attacked to-day from the standpoint of a person or even of an epoch. By self-scrutiny, corrected by the study of other selves, both past and present, the conscientious student must continually endeavour to universalise his conclusions. In proportion as they are thus universalised, as they are the possible results of mental faculty or of moral nature, they will satisfy the faith which demands, if not a philosophy "in one piece," then a philosophy which perceives fragments of distinctively intellectual and ethical creation shaping themselves to ends alike in kind though different in degree.

PESSIMISM AS A SYSTEM.

I. Introductory.

"CURSE God, and die." "Pity God—who is a miserable devil—and live to lessen his eternal wretchedness." Startling as they may appear, these conclusions of modern Pessimism are no products of capricious self-dissatisfaction. They do not necessarily bear witness to broken ideals, to adverse fortunes, or to embittered lives. They are rather the results of matured reflection on the graver problems of metaphysics, ethics, and religion. "The still sad music of humanity" has indeed lost none of its sadness, but it is no longer still. Suggestion or *motif* now dominates accompaniment, and the recurring wail of isolated melancholy has swelled into an inharmoniously harmonious symphony of despair.

The importance of recent Pessimism is partly to be gauged by the assurance with which its professors advance it as a working theory of the world. Schopenhauer supposed that he had superseded Kant, but Hartmann regards his "philosophy of the Unconscious"

as the last word of speculation. All that is valuable in Hegel and the idealists, no less than in Kant and Schopenhauer, is alleged to be brought to a unity there. Nor are his co-workers—Bahnsen,¹ Du Prel,² Mainländer,³ and Preuss,⁴ to name no others—one whit less confident. Pessimism, in short, has not merely a history and a bizarre theosophy, it now puts in a claim to be *the* system of the universe. A modest pretension, some one will say. Yet it is not entirely without historical warrant. Moreover, as a system, Pessimism commits itself to certain definite issues, and the advantages of knowing that by these it must stand or fall are obvious.

History is the best witness to the reasonableness of Pessimism. It might conceivably be shown, that in the development of civilisation there are periods when the apparent contradiction inherent in things imperiously commands attention. The joyousness of pre-Socratic Greece or of Elizabethan England is seldom of long duration. One generation accepts life as a fact, the next must needs frame a theory of it. Loss of contentment usually accompanies reflection, and then heart-searchings arise. But while this might be proved true of epochs, its application to individuals carries greater conviction, chiefly because more evidence can be led. Similar ages do not recur so frequently as similar men, and the particular seems more easy to understand than the general, in spite of the Platonic saying, "the state

¹ Cf. 'Beiträge zur Charakterologie' and 'Phil. d. Geschichte.'

² Cf. 'Der Kampf um's Dasein am Himmel' and 'Philosophy of Mysticism' (translated).

³ Cf. 'Phil. d. Erlösung.'

⁴ Cf. 'Die psychische Bedeutung d. Lebens im Universum.'

is the individual writ large." Even the happiest times have seldom lacked a Diogenes. The long roll of history furnishes a succession of prophets, saints, and poets, for whom the prevalence of pain and sin was an insoluble or overwhelming mystery. The writer of *Job*, whose "days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope," and the author of *Ecclesiastes*, who saw "no profit under the sun," had a fellow-plaintiff—a contemporary, perhaps—in the farther East. Kapila, the Brahmin evolution philosopher, announced that "the complete cessation of pain, which is of three kinds, is the complete end of man." At a later time, and under widely different circumstances, Stoic and Epicurean optimism gave way beneath the pressure of events. Suicide ended the wise man's quest for freedom. Once more, Gnosticism, concurring in the Platonic notion that matter is necessarily accompanied by evil, gave birth to the curious doctrine of God's fall. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, because the Creator, by his very act of creation, committed sin. Manichæism and Augustinianism, each in its own way, sought to explain or to eliminate evil. The so-called dualism of mediæval civilisation was largely due to a protest against the world and the ills inseparable therefrom. And its implied conclusion, that "if creation was a blunder, procreation is a crime," strangely foreshadowed some of the latest pessimistic deductions. But, cull illustrations as one may, the heart affliction and pitiful uncertainty on which despondency battens did not assert themselves unmistakably till the eighteenth century was nearing its dramatic close. Rousseau was the herald of a widespread movement. His 'Réveries' reveal a mental state through which

many have since passed. Sensibility become morbid, egoism determined to be self-sustained, nature willing itself unnatural,—these were his birthright and his legacy. Proclaiming himself the best of men, Rousseau deemed himself the most miserable.¹ Yet he put forth no effort to discover his own contribution to his despair. It is easy to set about reforming the universe, but the reformer has need first to consider his personal state. Self-sophistication, with its attendant vanity, constituted Rousseau's importance as the initiator of the Byronic school. The individualism of the French Revolution was beforehand with it in him. His sorrow and self-praise, his broken-hearted peace, and his greed of that approval which the world did not then know how to give, formed the insoluble contradictions of his life. Continually looking for himself in the wrong place, as it were, he as constantly found that he was in bondage to the "*gêne* and subjection which were insupportable to him." Little wonder that he waxed wroth with the world, and struggled to deliver himself from ill by striving to annul irritating but inevitable limitations of human life. He would have lost his significance had he been able to make Leopardi's confession: "I perceived that the more I isolated myself from men, and confined me to my own little sphere, the less I succeeded in protecting myself from the discomforts and sufferings of the outer world." Rousseau was either too introspective or not introspective enough to apprehend this. The French Revolution, which but embodied

¹ For some interesting details regarding Rousseau, see 'L'homme de Génie,' C. Lombroso; 'American Journal of Psychology,' vol. iii. pp. 406 *sq.*; and 'J. J. Rousseau's Krankheitsgeschichte,' P. J. Möbius (1889).

his doctrines in practice, was scarce well over, its wild dreams of an unobtainable freedom had hardly been dispelled, ere the disease of the age began to reassert itself, not indeed with fresh symptoms, but for new causes.

Byron in England, Leopardi in Italy, De Musset, Baudelaire, Gautier, and Leconte de Lisle in France, Heine in Germany, Lenau in Hungary, Poushkin in Russia, bore witness to widespread unrest. The hoped-for heaven upon earth could be found nowhere, and these writers gave utterance to the universal disappointment. Differences among them there certainly were, from the self-obtrusion of Byron to the impersonality of Leconte de Lisle. But one and all protest against the impassable barriers to intellectual satisfaction raised by human imperfection. The studied impassiveness, which so many now deem essential to art—especially to literary art—is only another phase of Byron's *implora eterna quiete*. "I hope that whosoever may survive me, and shall see me put in the foreigners' burying-ground at the Lido, will have those two words and no more put over me—'*Implora pace.*'" Statuesque impassibility amid human woes and the peace of the tomb are impracticable ideals. Born of the so-called unintelligible, they reduce not one whit the unintelligibility of things. Sentimental Pessimism, whether in Ferrara seventy years ago or in Paris¹ to-day, seeks to assuage grief by the grievous. Repression is without pity, and the peace of death is no anodyne for the sorrow of life.

¹ Cf., *e.g.*, Mons. Paul Bourget's 'Un Crime d'Amour,' or Mons. Maurice Barrès' 'Homme Libre.'

II. Schopenhauer's System.

The pessimism of the poets was not only unreasoned but also subjective. Each writer gave expression to his own dissatisfaction, and sought relief for himself after the manner which best pleased him. But the "sadness which clings to all finite life" was then so universally felt as to demand a more systematic explanation. Byron and Leopardi were aweary; so were many others everywhere. The high-strung sensibility of the genius is racked by unavoidable evils, but does not talent go unrewarded, and is not hunger the labourer's lot? Pessimism, in short, is as reasonable for society at large as for a few of its more gifted members. That is, it has objective no less than subjective validity; as such it cannot be compassed or mitigated by poetical caprice. A system is now necessary. If defect is not to reduce the world to moral and spiritual impotence, a reasoned account of it must be forthcoming. Leopardi's Icelander was opportunely devoured by a couple of famishing lions immediately after he had put his inconvenient question to Nature. The question still remained, and Schopenhauer was the first to attempt a systematic reply. "But since that which is destroyed suffers, and that which is born from its destruction also suffers in due course, and finally is in its turn destroyed, would you enlighten me on one point, about which no philosopher has hitherto satisfied me? For whose pleasure and service is this wretched life of the world maintained, by the suffering and death of all the beings which compose it?"¹ A theory of

¹ *Essays and Dialogues*, p. 79 (Edwardes' ed.)

the ultimate reality of the universe is indispensable to the solution of this problem, and Schopenhauer was the earliest to formulate it fully on the given premisses.

Now Schopenhauer, being a philosopher, was affected by the speculations of previous thinkers as were none of his poetic contemporaries. No doubt he too lived throughout the *Sturm und Drang* period, and brought its *Weltschmerz* to a point of unity. But his thought, as distinguished from his standpoint, was largely determined by Kant. Add Indian Buddhism, Plato, mediæval mysticism, and Schelling, and the elements of his system are enumerated. Its peculiar doctrines were drawn from these sources; the diffused discontent expressed by the poets called it forth; its aim was the diagnosis of misery and the prescription of a cure; reasoned pessimism was its result. Schopenhauer professedly sets out from the point where Kant stopped. In this he only followed his pet aversions, Fichte and Hegel.

In Kant's philosophy, rigorously interpreted, knowledge is ever shadowed by two unknown and unknowable realities. First, there is the much-debated thing-in-itself. Experience is composed of two elements—the form, which belongs to mind, and the matter, which is perceived indirectly through the medium of the senses. Mind is able to superimpose its forms upon sensation, and knowledge results. Thus, all that we know consists of a series of sensations, which have been moulded into thoughts by the action of the mind. That is to say, knowledge is only of ideas, not of realities,—but of ideas into which an element of sensation necessarily enters. If this be true, evidently external objects as they actually are have no place in experience. Sensation interposes between the thing and the thinker;

it veils realities, but helps to disclose representations of them. The object never reaches the subject, nor he it. The thing-in-itself is thus the unknowable *cause* of our sensations. *That* it originates them we well know, *what* it actually is in its ultimate nature we are wholly ignorant. It is one of the inexplicables of life which testify to the limitation of human thought. "The understanding makes nature, but out of a material which it does not make." Man, consequently, never knows realities, but only phenomena; yet realities exist. Secondly, on the subjective as well as on the objective side of experience, there is an unknowable residuum. In a manner no one can ever fully fathom his own personality. That synthetic power—most familiar in the operation of memory—which, as it were, is a spectator of every changing state, and is itself unmoved, constitutes each individual all that he ultimately is. But for the very reason that this ego transcends change, it is above experience. Like the thing-in-itself, it can never be made a direct object of thought. The definite acts of imagination, perception, and the like, are all cognisable. Their indispensable condition—the subjective reality which brings them to a unity in relation to a single self—remains ever hidden. There is, thus, a subjective or mental reality beyond thought; yet this reality exists.

Consequently, as Schopenhauer saw, reality is finally explained by Kant neither on the side of things nor on that of thought. Nevertheless, reality, both subjective and objective, has an independent certainty of its own. Schopenhauer addressed himself to this dilemma, and attempted to explain the Kantian inexplicables. Proceeding to his task, he agrees, as we have already

seen,¹ that objects are simply representations constituted by the mind. The known realities are, as with Kant, no more than phenomena. Precluded in this way from reaching the essential being of things objectively, Schopenhauer naturally falls back upon subjectivity. The key to the position is not to be found in the external, but in the internal, sphere. The world, Schopenhauer seems to reason, is unquestionably a mere series of representations conjured up by the intellect. But are my activities as a thinking being exhausted in such representation? Have I no other faculties? It is in this direction that he seeks the way to the absolutely real. Continuous energising, unwearied effort to assert himself, are, he concludes, the ultimate in every man's nature. The thinker is not a mere machine for grinding out phenomenal representations, he is far rather a subject who wills. Will, the persistent and impelling power in all acts, is thus the ego beyond experience with which Kant failed to grapple. The fact that I exist is consequent to the fact that I will. I am I, because I will. So the unknowable "I" of Kant is abolished. Nor is this all. Will is not only indirectly cognised through the intellect, but is directly perceived in bodily movements, which are its manifestations. "The body is the objectification of the will." This doctrine enables Schopenhauer to remove another difficulty. For he can constitute body the link between subjective personality—which is all compact of will—and the outer thing-in-itself. If my body be my will, then by an obvious analogy the phenomena represented to me in the guise of objects are each of them revelations of a will. As my being is ultimately grounded on will, so too is

¹ See above, p. 224 *sq.* ; cf. p. 204 *sq.*

theirs. Like me, they are will, both phenomenally and actually. Thus, by an easy transition, the elimination of the transcendental ego leads to the removal of the troublesome thing-in-itself. Finally, by another convenient analogy, it is concluded that Will is the ultimate reality of the world. If my body be identical with my will, and if all bodies be simply wills—"and all that we grasp offers resistance, because it has its own will that must be subdued"—then Will is the substratum of the universe. Phenomenal nature, including man, is therefore the visible manifestation of a Will. Whatever substantial truth it may have proceeds directly from this all-essential volition. The mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms are different only in degree, in kind they are homogeneous. "It is not the case that, in some way or other, there is a smaller part of Will in the stone, and a larger part in the man, for the relation of part and whole belongs exclusively to space, and has no longer any meaning when we go beyond this form of intuition or perception. The more and the less have application only to the manifestation—that is, the visibility, the objectifying—of Will. Of this there is a higher grade in the plant than in the stone; in the animal a higher grade than in the plant; indeed there are as many gradations in the Will's emergence into visibility, its objectification, as exist between the dimmest twilight and the brightest sunshine, between the loudest sound and the faintest echo."¹

How then does this Will necessitate pessimistic conclusions regarding the present world? Schopenhauer reverses the doctrine of previous thinkers, and especially of Kant. According to a general consensus of

¹ *Die Welt*, vol. i. pp. 144, 145 (Eng. trans., vol. i. pp. 166, 167).

opinion, in which Socrates, Augustine, Duns Scotus, Kant, Schelling, and Hegel join, will is a particular case of self-consciousness. It is the faculty which presides over practical or moral life, just as intellect directs discursive or subjective thought. At the same time, there could be no will without consciousness. Willing is but the outer side of thinking. The individual who acts must will, he need not will in order to contemplate. But, were he unable to contemplate, he could neither will nor act. Schopenhauer, on the contrary, regards the primal Will as an impersonal and unconscious force. Its one positive characteristic is that it is pregnant with indefinable desire. Like water in a reservoir, it would burst the dam if it could, and aimlessly realise its latent power by rushing anywhere. Accordingly, Will is neither God nor Devil: it contains no principle, nor is it subject to any law. It is a diffused potentiality, ready to take every direction for the sake of actualisation, yet unable of itself to choose any one. From this unconscious something Schopenhauer leaps to self-conscious man, to conscious animal, to living vegetable. Darkly striving Will first reveals itself—we are not told how—in the guises of mechanical force and chemical affinity. Then, still more inexplicably, it rushes from the sphere of dead matter into that of living beings.

“And vaguely in the pregnant deep,
Clasped by the glowing arms of light,
From an eternity of sleep
Within unfathomed gulfs of night
A pulse stirred in the plastic slime
Responsive to the rhythm of Time.”

Like Aristotle's Soul, Will follows the ascending

scale of plant, brute, and human life, attaining self-consciousness at length in man. The huge sweep of Schopenhauer's demonstration is fascinating. But it constantly suggests a difficulty. According to the theory, Will is all from the beginning; there is nothing external to it. Whence then its motive to definite revelation? Here Schopenhauer falls back upon Platonic mysticism, upon the mythological and specially unsatisfactory portion of Plato's theory. As it rises from its lower objectivity, in gravitation, to higher, in organism and self-consciousness, Will is causally directed in each operation by archetypal ideas. Behind the imperfect phenomena known in the world are pure ideas. These correspond to the objects and constitute their real perfection. Man's body, for example, is a manifestation of Will; therefore it is a "mere idea, as it is only the mode in which the Will represents itself in the view of the intellect." It is unnecessary to do more than draw attention to the vicious reasoning involved here. Idea, as Schopenhauer, with some little disregard of psychology, points out, is a product of intellect; but intellect, he continues, is produced by the brain; and brain is a revelation of Will *directed by idea!* The contradiction is obvious, and vitiates the entire argument. Will is postulated as the sole original reality, yet it is attended by other realities, the abstract Platonic ideas. Schopenhauer's ontological scheme presupposes this contradictory doctrine, and it in turn is the basis of his practical philosophy. By a species of ecstasy—a negation of the limits of reason, that is, of personality—artistic genius is able for a moment to identify itself with the archetypal idea, and thus to escape from the

dominion of Will. Such supreme moments are few, and their fruition is only for the select. Yet they constitute the one joy of human life. Cancel them, and this would be absolutely the worst of all possible worlds.

Will, the ultimately real, is essentially fraught with pain and every species of imperfection, because in its ceaseless and frantic effort to find perfect expression it is ever baffled. "Man's greatest crime is that he was born," said Calderon; and Schopenhauer, for the reason indicated, cordially indorsed the cheerful sentiment.¹ In being born, every individual of his own free act commits the unpardonable offence. He ought not to be born. For reality or perfection is beyond the bounds of time. Man, the individual, is perfect so be that he never become an individual—that he remain absorbed in the Will's eternal past. The perfection attaching to true reality flies for ever at the moment of birth. Life itself is an unreality, the supposititious past of the individual is a myth, and the same may be said not only of his future, but also of that of mankind. Immortality is an illusion. For, to gain perfection, man must divest himself of his own selfhood, and be received back again into the unconscious reality of Will, where nothing is distinguishable. Thus existence, by the very fact that it is, constitutes the most fearful of evils. Life, seeing that it possesses no inherent value, is worth living only in so far as it furnishes opportunity for regeneration by the extinction of self. "Curse God"—who is so framed that he must have your existence, and this without taking one iota of

¹ Cf. *Parerga*, vol. ii. p. 414 *sq.*

responsibility for its inevitable evil. "Curse God"—who can do nothing to redeem you from the sin into which his efforts have forced you. "Die," because death, being the negation of individuality, is the one good in life. "Die," for death alone can in any measure redeem you from the evil, which is the very essence of your present existence. Quietism, or the state in which the "will to live" has become utterly indifferent, is the acme of morality. The absolute selfishness of self-annihilation is the regenerating grace which overcomes the relative selfishness of living. "A painless sympathy with pain" is the moral ideal,—the most irrational entity in Schopenhauer's most irrational account of the world. "My doctrine therefore ends with a negation. It can only speak here of what is denied, surrendered; what is won, laid hold of instead, it can only describe as nothing, adding by way of comfort that it is only a relative nothing, not an absolute one."¹

Schopenhauer is often taken by critics as *par excellence* the representative of Pessimism. There are several plain reasons for this. To the public at large he is better known than any of his co-thinkers. Indeed, if Hartmann be excepted, he alone is more than a mere name. Besides, optimists, especially of the utilitarian school, are well aware that his system may be pulled to pieces without much difficulty. But it ought to be remembered that Schopenhauer is no more the corypheus of Pessimism than is Fichte of Idealism. Hartmann is his severest critic, just as Hegel was Kant's. The comparative ease with which he may be demolished certainly has its attractions; but, so far as

¹ Cf. *Die Welt*, bk. iv. sec. 71 (Eng. trans., vol. i. pp. 528 sq.)

Pessimism is concerned, the victory thereby loses much of its significance. Truth to tell, Schopenhauer, for all his system, was not without the poets' limitation. They wrote to express their own sorrows; his philosophy was in large part a projection of his own diseased nature. As Epicureanism recommended itself to the Sybarite, so did Pessimism appeal to him. I am jaundiced, therefore the world is altogether evil, wailed Byron, Lenau, and Leopardi. I have lost taste for life, sang Heine, and Baudelaire, and De Musset, so no life can be worth living. And to Schopenhauer also the *argumentum ad hominem* applies. Given me, a suspicious, selfish, and cowardly man, what deductions must be drawn respecting the world as a whole? This was, to all intents and purposes, Schopenhauer's problem. Still, even were it conclusively shown that his system was a reproduction of his sentiments, this would be a narrow, not to say unfair, view to adopt. Indeed, the scheme is so full of "miracles," inexplicables, and contradictions, that there is no necessity to press the unchivalrous personal argument against it. Even the most ardent pessimists admit that it stands in need of reconstruction, although none, so far as I am aware, point out, as they well might, that it falls to pieces from its own inner absurdity.

Take, for instance, the first principle itself. Little temerity is required to declare that the account of Will is filled with insuperable difficulties—difficulties some of which might quite well have been avoided. Schopenhauer himself tacitly admits this in his teleology. He does find traces of final cause in the universe, yet his ultimate reference is to a blind, unintelligent Will. The presence of mind to nature is impossible on the

theory; no rational conception of deity can be reconciled with it; and, notwithstanding, all that these imply is assumed. Again, even granted that Will were the inmost reality, it is installed as such in the most arbitrary fashion. The thing-in-itself might, with equal show of reason, be imagination, or memory, or internal perception. The selection of Will to receive this honour is purely capricious. So too are the limitations put upon it after it has been chosen. To postulate Will as the first principle, and then to reduce it necessarily to the "will to live," is very much as if one were to term bread a liberal diet.

Waiving these grave objections, in turn, let it be admitted that Will is the thing-in-itself. At the beginning it existed in sublime solitude—eternal, infinite, omnipotent. Yet, although thus everything, it might as well have been nothing. Desire to manifest itself ever was its one positive characteristic, but at no time could it gratify itself without receiving direction. This causal instigation had to be imparted to it from without. But at first there was nothing beside Will. Will was everything. By consequence on the theory itself, Will, although potentially everything, must of necessity remain actually nothing to all eternity. There is no source from which the aid indispensable to it can be derived. The process cannot be initiated, and the ultimately real is, despite the system, as much a mystery as at the first. Finally, in this connection, the conception of Will is derived analogically from the individual consciousness. But the basis of the analogy is itself a gratuitous assumption. Personality as known to us consists, at the last, of three inseparable factors, will, reason, and feeling, each of which implies many

elements. It is no more possible to detach the practical from the speculative life than it is to separate the outside from the inside of a building. According to Schopenhauer, however, reason has no practical side. It is restricted to the task of objectifying phenomena or representations. Will, which deals with reality, is entirely separate from it. Man is a concupiscent animal first, and by some strange chance he is found to be also a rational being. It is almost incredible that a thinker who proposed to correct Kant should have promulgated such a doctrine. Schopenhauer, as a matter of fact, took from reason whatever Kant had vindicated for it. This booty he handed over to his Will, forgetting the while that will is non-existent save in, through, and to reason.

Passing to more general considerations, it could be shown, without recourse to ingenuity, that Schopenhauer's method precludes him from framing any theory of the world as a whole. He starts as a strict subjective idealist. For each the world is simply his own representation. On this basis Schopenhauer is no more able than Locke, Berkeley in his first period, or Hume, to construct a complete system of the universe legitimately. His inconsequences in this matter are far more surprising than those of the so-called "insular" philosophers, whom it is now the fashion to deride. Mind, he tells us, is produced by matter. Yet matter, as common-sense informs us,—and of this Schopenhauer was by no means devoid,—is constituted by mind. We know it in the form of mental representation. By this admission the theory was rendered inapplicable even to the experience of the isolated individual. But Schopenhauer, very naturally, did not

rest satisfied with this impotent conclusion. Having shut the individual up within the narrow circle of self, Schopenhauer took a grim revenge upon his frailty. He straightway burdened him with the overwhelming weight of all phenomena. Every man intuitively recognises himself to be possessed of will — this is his ultimate nature. Thus, by a miracle, the knowing being, who is without will, becomes one with the willing being, who is without intellect. Thereupon, in an equally miraculous manner, the willing being perceives intellectually that his will and his body are identical. On this "prepared ground," next, he erects the theory that all the world is will. Needless to say, the premisses of this argument are absurd; they stand relatively to the conclusion, as one instance to an induction which excludes nothing. Ingenious as the entire reasoning may be, it is altogether incoherent.

"Whatever sceptic could inquire for,
For every why he had a wherefore."

In his attempt to adduce proofs—when he does not fall back on "miracles"—Schopenhauer is equally unfortunate. He fails to give any rounded account of human life, yet he puts man forward as the explanation of all things. The whole is to be rationalised in terms of a part of this part. But a satisfactory philosophy, like an adequate science, must regard the part as important or essential just because it stands in a certain relation to the whole. Given the liver, constitute all animals, is a complete reversal of scientific method—the more, in Schopenhauer's case, that he regards mind as a product of matter.

Again, turning to the ethical side of the system, it

is hard to see how the virtue, which is the crown of life, is to be attained. A conscientiousness, for instance, judging good deeds by an ideal standard, is dependent upon the transmutation into character of every tendency towards uprightness. But, were Schopenhauer's virtue to be realised, no such moralising agencies could exist. The virtue of repression might have some meaning in relation to unholy passions; it becomes self-stultifying when applied to the impulse without which there could be no virtue. And, if the ethical method be precisely the wrong one, so too is the moral ideal. Schopenhauer's new birth is a transformation which cannot take place. No moral regeneration, as Schopenhauer and his successors proved to demonstration, is possible through the intellect alone. Virtue is not knowledge. The *tat twam asi* (this thou art), of which Schopenhauer made so much, may, in one aspect of it, be an excellent motto. Man may very well attain the highest moral level, may most vividly recognise the necessity for self-perfecting, when inspired by an enthusiasm for his kind, and directed by a perception of his office in the unity of all things. But if there be one way in which he can baulk the realisation of moral excellence, and cheat humanity, not to say deity, of his individual contribution to good, it is by asceticism, by a studied repression of all that he has in him to become. No one is regenerate—born again in the most literal sense—until he has actually built into character the whole potentiality of his nature. Only thus is the "common good" adequately subserved, only thus is the fate of the unprofitable servant to be escaped. Without us the saints of the ages are not made perfect. They cannot be so perfected unless we first

realise the good that is in us, not by passive intellectual contemplation, but by actively striving with every faculty to be the best that it lies in us to become. Schopenhauer's ideal has admittedly certain formal excellences, but his conception of the manner in which they may receive material application effectually ensures their eternal unreality.

Finally, if these manifest weaknesses did not undermine confidence in the doctrine as a competent theory of the world and of man, it might easily be shown that the entire system is founded upon several gratuitous assumptions. A philosophy of an extremely dogmatic type, it lays down inherently indispensable principles with a confidence which might well make the ultra-Calvinist green with envy. It assumes, for example, that personality, freedom, and God are non-existent. There can be no impervious individual selfhood if the absolute reality be Will. There can be no freedom, and therefore no moral responsibility, if blind force, "striking out at random," be the mainspring of the universe. And Schopenhauer, for reasons perfectly sufficient from his point of view, declares that there is no God. Once more, his wonderful doctrine of pleasure and pain has already been abandoned by pessimists. It is opposed to all psychology. Yet the persistence of pain, and the negative nature of pleasure, are urged by him, with assurance equalled only by a disregard of the facts which positively amounts to genius. Nor unreasonably; without this dogma, his theory would fall to the ground. And, as if trespass sufficient had not already been made upon good-nature, the scheme quietly appropriates a third assumption. The all-inclusive Will which, strange to tell, is as dissatisfied as Carlyle's shoeblack,

enslaves intellect to fulfil its blind desires. The practical portion of the system has this assumption for pivot. But the doctrine that Will is the lord of intellect, and of all that intellect implies, has about as much foundation as the parallel statement, that pug is the lord of dog. The species cannot stand in place of the genus which includes it. Pessimism, according to Schopenhauer, is meaningless when reduced to its bare terms. For the reasons already adduced, among many others which might be cited, it may fairly be characterised as thoroughly unsatisfactory. It conforms to scarcely one of the requirements of a monistic theory; and this is the more certain, that it has been repudiated in essentials by later sympathisers. Suicide by metaphysics is the end which it proposes to man; it is itself a metaphysical *felo de se*, and as such may be taken either for dead or unaccountable.

III. Hartmann's Position.

Superior to Schopenhauer in many respects, though clearly inferior in literary style and perhaps in analytic perception, Hartmann is more representative of the most modern Pessimism. The earlier thinker, it may be admitted, responded to certain needs of his age, as well as to the calls of his own gloomy nature. He gave tolerably systematic expression to the reaction from perfervid hope to blank despair which so many finer minds experienced after the French Revolution. Inflated expectations had been generated then, and the slow, but ceaseless, contraction was fraught with widespread spiritual misery. But even at this, 'The World as Will and Representation' is hardly more than an

outwork of the pessimistic citadel. Hartmann is often called a disciple of Schopenhauer, and many allege that his divergence from his reputed master is slight or superficial. It would be fairer to say that he is Schopenhauer's descendant. So far from being his disciple, he rather stands related to him as did Hegel to Kant. Indeed the gulf between the two leading pessimists is wider than that between the two great idealists. For Hegel saw Kant through the medium of Fichte and Schelling,—all four were of the same school,—whereas Hartmann sees Schopenhauer refracted, as it were, through Hegelianism—that is, through a fundamentally different philosophy. Further, the new set of historical influences to which he was subjected have not been without result in his system. The *Weltschmerz*, classically so called, has died down; positive science has accomplished, as he himself says, “stupendous achievements”; population has increased, and along with this, the rapid rise of the middle class, and the incentives to a certain modicum of education, have crowded the “genteel,” and often half-cultured, professions; even among nations the struggle for existence is keener, and military service or warlike credits press heavy upon the people. These and other historical facts cannot but have given new direction to Hartmann's thoughts. But it can also be shown that his more important divergences from Schopenhauer are in greater part due to the rich philosophical material which he found ready to hand. Indeed, from one point of view, it would be as correct to term him a follower of Hegel as of Schopenhauer. If he denounce the dialectic method of the one, he also scouts the blind Will of the other. If the ‘Philosophy of the Unconscious’ be in some

degree a commentary upon Schopenhauer, the 'Phenomenology of the Ethical Consciousness' has Hegel for text. Nay, in the former Hartmann strays farther from Schopenhauer than he does from Hegel in the latter. Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to declare that his system draws its strength from Hegel. Where it is weak one may mark the influence of Schopenhauer; where it is suggestive, and more particularly where it betrays strong historical sense, there Hegel is at work. Hartmann, then, is to be regarded as the protagonist of systematic pessimism, because philosophical progress has afforded him opportunities of which he has not been slow to take advantage, and because he has endeavoured, with remarkable ingenuity, to unite evolutionary optimism with metaphysically decreed misery. Active effort to annihilate pain is the burden of his teaching.

Hartmann's principal philosophical relations to Hegel and Schopenhauer must first be noted. Speaking in general terms, it may be said that his system is the product of an attempt, first, to trace Hegel's Absolute Idea and Schopenhauer's Blind Will to a higher unity; and, second, to prove this proceeding, *a posteriori*, by judicious selections from the discoveries of exact science—the more recent the better. Under direct inspiration of the evolution hypothesis, Hartmann proceeds to analyse the conception of final cause. In this analysis his attitude, alike to Schopenhauer, Hegel, and Darwin—taking names for movements—is defined with sufficient clearness. According to the more materialistic evolutionists, adaptation of means to ends in organic nature is the result of action and reaction. Just as one billiard-ball imparts impetus to another by impact, and

loses part of its kinetic energy, so the action of surroundings upon, say, the tortoises of the Galapagos Islands, has caused them to vary wonderfully from their relatives on the South American continent. Absence of enemies, for instance, has acted upon the members of the Galapagos species, which again have reacted, and so have attained their present abnormal size. The process, in the one case, as in the other, is mechanical, or at least, for the tortoise, as nearly mechanical as may be. There is no particle of design visible in the unwonted growth. In this view Hartmann, while accepting the fact of development, cannot concur. After careful consideration, consisting in part of inferences drawn from the mathematical theory of probability, he concludes that development cannot be ultimately explained apart from certain conditions. These are, the presence of a Will which desires, and of an Intellect which devises, the observed changes. Intelligent Will is the efficient cause of the world's progress, and the immanent final cause or purpose of universal life. Here the divergence of Hartmann from both Hegel and Schopenhauer at once appears. Hegelian idealism, with its doctrine of mind permeating matter, is grafted on to Schopenhauer's alogical or irrational realism, which finds the cause of all things in an unintelligent and arbitrary Will. But Hegel's dialectic progress by antagonism is set aside, and the boast is made that conclusions are reached by the more scientific methods of induction and analogy. The idealistic unity of thought and being is also repudiated, and the thing-in-itself is ejected by the machinery of the Unconscious, which, it may be fairly alleged, was primarily invented for this purpose. Further, Hartmann

claims that the Unconscious, as a *Neutrum*¹ from which both will and intellect proceed, includes and transcends Hegel's first principle. Of course it is a question whether this plan of abolishing Idealism does not rather intensify Hegel's alleged intellectualism, and this while losing such advantages as his system undoubtedly had.

But, whatever one may think of Hartmann's inferiority to Hegel, there can be no question of his superiority, as a system-maker, to Schopenhauer. Doubtless he agrees with his predecessor on certain points. Both, for example, attach much weight to the relative proportion of pain to pleasure in life; both declare that the world is phenomenal, not real; both refer reality to an unintelligent first principle, and, as a consequence, deny freewill. Again, except on the first question, both are disciples of Kant, and they further agree to differ from him regarding the possibility of a science of the intelligible. But, even on the points just indicated, their methods of investigation are so diverse, that apparent similarities are largely obliterated. In practice Hartmann differs from Schopenhauer on several all-important questions. First, by declaring, with Aristotle, that there "is no volition without mental object,"² he at once abolishes the unintelligence of Schopenhauer's Will. "This simple consideration," he says, "exposes the singular defectiveness of the system of Schopenhauer, in which the Idea is by no means recognised as the sole and exclusive content of Will, but a false and subordinate position is assigned it, whilst the maimed and blind

¹ Here Hartmann might be shown to be indebted to Schelling.

² *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, vol. i. pp. 119, 120.

Will nevertheless altogether comports itself *as if* it had a notional or ideal content." Secondly—a point which critics have been too ready to burk—Schopenhauer was a subjective idealist, Hartmann is not. To the former the world is simply my representation, your representation; always, that is to say, the individual's for himself. With Hartmann, although reality is only phenomenal, it still has a rateable value. The revelation of the Unconscious, unlike the manifestation of Will, has a worth of its own, albeit ultimate essence still resides in the first principle independently of its phenomena. The truth is, modern science has led Hartmann away from subjective idealism to one of the most curious forms of ideal-realism ever constructed. Thirdly, this new doctrine respecting the world's reality resulted in a theory of "man and his dwelling-place" altogether different from Schopenhauer's. So far from considering this sphere the worst possible, Hartmann declares that, for all its misery, it is the best that could be. Wretchedness truly is inevitable; but, as if to compensate, the plan for its removal can be put into execution only here and now. The extinction of pain is the sole reason for the being of this cursed globe and its thrice-cursed inhabitants. As a consequence, Schopenhauer's quietism becomes an absurdity. Redemption is to be universal, not individual; therefore it must be wrought out by ceaseless co-operation in the common cause. Passive contemplation can but retard Hartmann's final theocracy. For the gradual recognition by individuals of their essential unity with one another will reveal the long-veiled truth, that all participate in a pact to free God—and themselves—from pain by annihilation of consciousness. "Real

existence is the incarnation of deity ; the world process is the passion-history of God made flesh, and at the same time the way to the redemption of him who was crucified in the flesh. To be moral is to lend a helping hand in shortening this way of suffering and of redemption.”¹

IV. Hartmann's relation to the Realism of his Predecessors.

In order to disengage Hartmann's universalism from the mass of heterogeneous material with which it is overlaid, we may first look at his account of his relation to his great predecessors, always accepting, as far as we can, his own opinions. Although he did not attempt this in his earlier works, he has latterly tried to father his pessimism upon Kant.² His main aim is to prove that the philosophy of Kant, in so far as it is realistic, is as much responsible for his own pessimism as for the optimism of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. There are, no doubt, not a few points in Kant's criticism of utilitarianism and of eudæmonism in general which lend themselves to Hartmann's very acute treatment. For Kant was not wholly unaffected by the tenets of Rousseau's school. The argument in its entirety, however, is not convincing. This appears especially in the fact that it is almost exclusively directed against the unquestioned optimism of Kant in the 'Critique of Practical Reason,' where he looks for

¹ Phän. des sitt. Bewusstseins, p. 685.

² Cf. Zur Geschichte u. Begründung des Pess. (especially the chap. "Kant als Vater des Pess.")

the final unification of completed morality with happiness. On the other hand, Hartmann certainly scores an important advantage when he shows, from the metaphysical rather than the ethical side, that Transcendental Realism has a critical basis. On Kant's own theory, the categories possess only an immanent value. As forms operative in the mind, and throughout all knowledge of this or that individual, they are good. But then they apply solely to phenomena. Knowledge of the actual cannot take place by their means. This circumstance Hartmann uses as a stepping-stone to his proof, that *he*, equally with Hegel, is a child of the realistic or universalising movement inaugurated by Kant. For he says, if the categories have a partial value as regards reality, they also have, in their own right, a transcendent value. As matter of common experience, we are not denizens of two worlds. The phenomena known by means of the categories are, so far as we are concerned, identical with the objects in the real world. In other words, there is some secret relationship between *our* thoughts and things. To this the intelligibility of the universe, in terms of our thought, is due. At the same time, we do not create things, nor do they create our ideas. Therefore, the transcendental scheme, propounded by Kant, depends on a reference alike of our thoughts and of things to another rational principle or power. This power, Hartmann argues, made things while as yet unconscious. In our thoughts it arrives at a consciousness of its creation. Consequently, to render Kant self-consistent, the realism which is hidden in his philosophy must be brought to light and emphasised. Our thoughts are integral parts of the process of self-

evolution through which the pristine Unconscious inevitably passes, and things are simply projections of the Unconscious, which, in us, informs itself of their being.

But, if this ingenious view of his genealogical relation to Kant be an afterthought, the same cannot be said of Hartmann's conception of his connection either with Hegel or Schelling. The 'Philosophy of the Unconscious' and 'Schelling's Positive Philosophie'—which, although published sooner, was written later than the *chef-d'œuvre*—conclusively show that he had it in mind to unify panlogism and alogism, empirical pessimism and *a priori* optimism. He proposed to do this by criticising Hegel from the standpoint of Schopenhauer; by criticising Schopenhauer from the Hegelian position; and, finally, by abolishing the half-monism of both, to render each a subordinate part in a more thorough-going system of realism. With respect to Schopenhauer, Hartmann's task was in a manner easy. He saw, as every unprejudiced thinker must observe, that blind Will furnishes no explanation of the phenomena of consciousness which everywhere demand attention. The philosopher is necessarily most familiar with the combination of will-power and rational intuition which are alike present in man's life; and these are not reducible to incomplex manifestations of the unilluminated will. Hence, as Hartmann points out, the attempt of Schopenhauer to receive materialism into philosophy is meritorious but indefensible. "His compromise was unsatisfactory; it allowed Materialism the intellect, and reserved speculation to the will. This violent dismembering is his weak point; for if once conscious ideation and thought be handed over to

Materialism, it has full right to claim also conscious feeling, and therewith conscious desire and volition, since the physiological phenomena have the same expression for all conscious activities of mind.”¹

Further, taking his cue from Schopenhauer's blatant scepticism, yet criticising rather than following, Hartmann sweeps away subjective idealism. The world is, no doubt, a phenomenon in the sense that its reality—the Unconscious—is not fully manifested. But it nevertheless has real being, and presents a real development in time under the form of history. As contrasted with his predecessor, one of Hartmann's most striking qualities is his recognition of the meaning and value of history. But this only goes to prove that his universalism is more radical. While Schopenhauer perceives that the individual is in the grasp of an unseen power “behind the face,” Hartmann alleges that the universe as a whole, now and always, presents distinct proofs of the determining force exercised by an all-embracing principle. History is a witness, not to the people in whose lives it has been wrought out, but to the use made of *them* and *their* events by a power whose unwitting instruments they were. This, Hartmann argues, was rendered necessary by Schopenhauer's neglect. For Schopenhauer represented an extreme reaction against the exclusive attention devoted to categories, rather than to reality, by the major idealists; and against the sublation of will in intellect, characteristic of the Hegelian system. As a reaction his philosophy was one-sided, and Hartmann proposed to reconstruct it with the requisite alterations. These were to be brought about by greater attention to

¹ Cf. *Phil. of the Unconscious*, vol. iii. pp. 163, 185, 323 *sq.*

history; by a reconsideration of the development of idealism, which Schopenhauer had "pigheadedly" ignored; and by a transfiguration of Schopenhauer's peculiar materialism, in which, while scientific fact obtained due predominance, the indispensable *Zweck* would be brought back in order to weld empirical detail into organic unity. *Alleinheit* as regards the world—the world both as including, and as in contradistinction to, persons—is therefore Hartmann's motto. Like Schopenhauer, he is a strict determinist as concerns phenomena—and man is a phenomenon; unlike him, his libertarianism with regard to first principles is so unequivocal that it invades the spiritual sphere, and takes man captive in soul no less than in body. There is a kind of freedom for the individual even under Schopenhauer's scheme of the 'Fourfold Root.' The very possibility of freedom is denied from the first by Hartmann. For consciousness, of which freedom is an attribute, turns out to be an accident inherent in the Unconscious. Or, putting it otherwise, Schopenhauer's deduction always impresses one as if it were an instance of a haphazard kind of induction. After he has applied it, without any rigorous system, to this, that, or the other thing, one has a vague notion that an endless number of facts still remain to be subsumed under it. Not so with Hartmann. He ostentatiously begins with induction; then, by a sudden leap, he jumps the chasm filled with seething particulars, and reaches deductive ground. Safely arrived there, he employs the deductive method, by which everything is put in its "proper" place, and is left fixed without power either of expression or movement. Schopenhauer appears to select certain indi-

viduals from the crowd for treatment; Hartmann unceremoniously marches every one off, leaving not a wrack behind. The theory of evolution as used by him renders his philosophy neither more realistic nor more transcendental than Schopenhauer's; it enables him to be incomparably more systematic. For, while Schopenhauer only pities the wretch who cannot reach quietism, or rails upon him because he *does* enjoy life, Hartmann informs him that he cannot but work out his own damnation in fear and trembling. Whatever he, the single man, may think, damnation cannot but be salvation. By the introduction of considerations such as these, the "transcendental reality of nature and history is again invested with its rights." Realism, which before had been little better than a winged head flying in the blue, is now to be invested with a body, its feet are to be firmly planted upon the solid earth.

Hartmann's early attack upon Hegel tends rather to obscure his relation to the great idealist. But the 'Dialectic Method,' as its name indicates, is more a discussion of the *kind* of universal progress elucidated by philosophy, and of the manner in which philosophy should seek to treat this progress, than a statement of a fundamentally different theory.¹ As has already been pointed out, Hartmann is indebted to idealism for what is most valuable in his system. Although he rejects the scholasticism, of which the dialectic scheme is typical, he keeps the scheme itself, and works it according to a new plan. The Hegelian universalism, if of the absolutely logical order, is converted by Hartmann into what he calls "concrete monism." His aim is to show that it is unnecessary to identify categorical

¹ Cf. Ueber die Dialek. Methode, p. 119 *sq.*

sequence with real order, because the real order is simply a mirror in which the power productive of categories displays itself. While Hartmann descants on Hegel's merits "in philosophy of rights, æsthetics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of history, and history of philosophy," he utterly condemns the Hegelian method, which "brought in everywhere obscurity and confusion, made the plain difficult, and removed the dark and problematical further from its solution." This attitude towards Hegel is the clue to Hartmann's "mission." He does not desire to find the essence of reality in ideal categories; he rather wishes to receive science and its empirical data with open arms. But having done this, he wants to show that, after all, reality is phenomenal, and derives such meaning as it has from an inner principle to which it furnishes a medium of self-manifestation. By its very conception, therefore, absolute reality—Being in its own right—attaches only to this principle. Hegelian realism is one-sided, and this fresh philosophy proposes, by a more thorough-going redaction, to eliminate the defect. Hartmann, in short, differs from Hegel chiefly in his conception of the method which is best fitted to include everything within the grasp of a single principle. He aims at vivifying universalism by cancelling the dialectic method, which "is incapable of life."

The notion which dominates Hartmann in this reconstruction of Schopenhauer and Hegel is very plainly expressed by himself.¹ "Wherever we may look among the original philosophical systems of first rank, everywhere do we meet with the tendency to monism, and it is only stars of second or third magnitude which find

¹ Phil. of the Unconscious, vol. ii. pp. 234, 239.

satisfaction in an external dualism or even greater division. . . . In all philosophies of the modern epoch this tendency to monism is more or less perfectly realised in one fashion or other." History of philosophy and the past yearnings of the human spirit furnish the proof of monism. Hegel and Schopenhauer are the last "moments" in this history, and they are at one in their realism. Each of them, however, has laid hold of a partial truth only. To correct the former it is necessary to think of the latter, and *vice versa*. Schopenhauer did not prove his realism, and Hegel set about proving his in the wrong way. The sole sufficient method of proof gives due place both to idea and fact—the positive sciences must have their "pound of flesh." Scientific results, when fully considered, present the philosopher with a means of perceiving the true nature of the only possible first principle. The world is not merely Contingent, as Hegel alleged, it is as true and necessary as the Idea. For both point to a common source that contains the reality of which they are but the phenomenal manifestation. Here the alogical Will, which has no ideal, and the logical Idea, which has no content, meet; and from their embrace is born the world. Fact is removed in a moment from the sphere of the temporal to that of the eternal, from which the former *must* have proceeded *in a certain way*. The wrong and evil lie in the *must*, the possibility of escape lies in the *certain way*. The world, seeing that its *dual* reality is the result of a process in a *monistic* principle which includes will and intellect, *ought not to have been*. Now that it is, we must make the best of it, in so far as the *kind* of its being permits. This point is vividly put by Ueberweg:¹

¹ Hist. of Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 336.

"This doctrine, therefore, regards the world . . . as the product of a good mother and of a bad father. . . . The Idea cannot escape the lover's embrace, and brings forth the child, which ought not to exist; . . . but, with maternal solicitude, she provides the unhappy child with all the good gifts with which she is able to alleviate his misfortune, and if the necessity of his passing through the severe struggle of development here cannot be averted, yet a redemption is provided in the annihilation of the will, and the joylessness of Nirvana." Hegel is out-Hegeled here. The "unearthly ballet of bloodless categories" becomes an earthly devil-dance of flesh and blood. Man's punishment is almost greater than he can bear, except for this, that in bearing it he may extinguish both its cause and himself. As I have said, in Hartmann's improvement of Schopenhauer and Hegel, the principles of the latter predominate. Although he intends to clothe the Idea with a body taken from Schopenhauer's materialism, Hartmann fails to bring about a living unity. And this failure is emphasised by the gradual dominion which *logical*, as distinct from empirical, ways of thinking, gain over him. They literally *present* him with the *Zweck* of which he makes so much. His universalism in the end turns out to be an intellectualism more pronounced than that of Hegel. The tendency to resolve ethics and religion into mental acts, traceable in the idealist school, is brought to full stature by Hartmann. For the end towards which he conceives the world to be moving is pictured with much religiosity. The new ethics and the new religion of spirit, in the pursuit and practice of which Hegelian bonism is to be sublated,—sublated in a temporal pessimism that is laden with the eternal

optimism of emptiness,—are nothing but special products of a *philosophical* theory. Present ethics and present religion are condemned on account of their formal rules or formulated dogmas. They are judged on purely intellectual grounds, and a hyper-intellectualism, puffed up with a teleology that has no τέλος, takes the places from which they have been unceremoniously ousted. Hartmann's "reconstruction of the Hegelian system from its first principle" is thus nothing more than a further development of the realistic tendency of modern philosophy. In ethics it abolishes all possibility of the development of personality in a kind of ecstatic altruism towards a god. And what a god! That his egoism is the reason for our self-sacrifice, makes it hard to live for him. But that his eternal self-flagellation should demand our worship in order that he, along with us, may cease to exist in any knowable mode, is a theory which not only passes comprehension, but also puts belief out of the question.

V. The Resultant Scheme.

These historical filiations practically prepare us for the main features of Hartmann's system, and only the barest outline of a scheme so vast can be given here. For the 'Philosophy of the Unconscious,' as too many of its opponents have been prone to forget, is itself but an outline. In its author's own words, taken from the preface to the French translation, "La philosophie de l'Inconscient n'est pas un système ; elle se borne à tracer les linéaments principaux d'un système. Elle n'est pas la conclusion, mais le programme d'une vie entière de travail."

In a summary sketch of Hartmann's philosophy, it is probably well to set out from the significant words which stand upon the title-page of his best known work: "Speculative results according to the inductive method of physical science." True to this motto, Hartmann begins by referring to a class of psycho-physical phenomena, respecting which comparative ignorance prevails even to-day, and the 'Philosophy of the Unconscious' was ready for press twenty-seven years ago. Latent modifications, sleep and dreams, trance, "second sight," are still, for all our study of hypnotism and progress in physiological psychology, little better than "occult" phenomena. Hartmann, however, founding upon them, declares that man is unwittingly determined by a sub-consciousness, over the manifestations of which he has no initiatory control. This is the Unconscious, and, as its action is never suspended, it is the ultimate reality. In some respects it is by no means unlike Schelling's principle of identity. But, whereas Schelling traced subject and object back to a *Neutrum* in which both disappeared, Hartmann brings idea and reality out of the Unconscious. He rids himself of Kant's thing-in-itself by the *a priori* statement, that from the Unconscious—"the Real"—proceed two phenomenal modes. These are the objective appearances of nature and the subjective appearances of perception. Knowledge of the Unconscious may therefore be obtained either objectively or subjectively. Mysticism, which with Hartmann stands for deduction, and scientific induction, are consequently the twin methods of philosophy. By the former the Unconscious is itself cognised—an allegation, by the way, which reminds one of Jacobi, the least rigorously inclined of thinkers. The

results thus obtained are thereafter "treated" by the second process. Application of the idea of development to man and nature, and particularly, observation of instances that support it, lead to the discovery that, from eternity, the Unconscious must have consisted of Will and Idea. The former imparts momentum, as it were, the latter supplies the object moved. "No one can in reality *merely* will, without willing *this* or *that*; a will which does not will *something* is not; only through the *definite content* does the will obtain the possibility of existence, and this content . . . is *Ideal*."¹ Hartmann is now in possession of a method, and of a first principle. Moreover, he has a theory of the world's genesis which has the advantage that it offers an apparent explanation of the dualism between subject and object. What, then, does he make of them?

Something more than a reminiscence of Schelling may be traced in his account of the origin of consciousness. Intellect was originally a servant of Will, doing its behests without murmur or question. But a time came when rebellion disturbed this harmony, and out of the friction thus occasioned consciousness emerged. So the product itself essentially involved recognition of an antagonism between its generative elements. This expository narrative of consciousness is not new. It is common to nearly all mystics. Boehme, for example, explicitly held by it; and the same may be said of Schelling in his fantastic moods, as indeed of his many extravagant disciples. In fact, so far as this question is concerned, Hartmann has a great deal in common with Schelling, always taking Schelling at his worst. The view he adopts is

¹ Philosophy of the Unconscious, vol. i. pp. 118, 119.

important here, because it conditions his entire theory of the universe, and originates his doctrine of pleasure and pain. According to his contention, pleasure and pain are not names given to certain affections of the sensible organism. They are intimately connected with the opposition between Will and Intellect. When the designs of the former are fulfilled by the latter, pleasure accrues, and *vice versa*. The distinction between them thus depends upon genesis, not at all upon constitution. Alike in pleasure and pain the possibility of conflict is the essential factor. The immanent causality of the Unconscious from the first tended towards this opposition. For, with consciousness and its attendant opposition between Will and Intellect, the possibility of emancipating the rational from the heavy yoke of the irrational appeared. The fact that this contest has begun is at once the kernel of Hartmann's ontology and the *raison d'être* of his pessimism; while the conception that it exists for a purpose is the content of his idea of development and the *rationale* of his ethics.

His pessimism originates somewhat as follows. When Will, in its passionate desire for self-satisfaction, threw out the world, Intellect had not yet illuminated it. And at a much later period, when Intellect—in consciousness—was so far freed from Will as to be able to view the universe, the only opinion which it could form was, "Behold, it is very bad." The greatest of evils is the world's existence. For, if opposition be the sole principle of organic life, unhappiness, despite the conventional distinction between pleasure and pain, can be its only result. Hartmann, true to his "speculative results according to the inductive method of physical science," proceeds to prove this proposition from com-

mon experience. It is good for the Unconscious that consciousness should supervene in the world. This, indeed, was the original intention. Consequently, in order to further its own ends, the Unconscious has surrounded man with illusions to which he applies the general term, happiness. Hitherto, the allegation is, educational progress and increase of culture have tended towards the unmasking of these shams. The early age of Greece was the period of the first great deceit. Mankind was then like a child. Full of high hopes for the future, peoples dreamt of a time when the present life would brim over with happiness. The answer to this anticipation was the Roman dominion, which in time itself embosomed terrific despair. Ere the age of Seneca every art had been plied to conjure up a beatific freedom, every artifice had been employed to manufacture it, and without avail.

“On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell ;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.”

But as the hope that happiness might be realised on earth faded into thin air, it was succeeded by another. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth ; lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” The world is very evil, but man has a home beyond the grave, where sin and misery have no place. Thither he will go, body and soul, on the resurrection morn. The second stage of the illusion thus is, that “happiness is conceived attainable by the individual in a transcendent life after death.” Christianity delivered dying Paganism from annihilating despair, but, save for this, it has no value.¹ “The

¹ Cf. *Philos. of the Unconscious*, vol. iii. p. 91.

Christian theory of the world is simply incapable of rising to the complete resignation of happiness; even Christian asceticism is out and out selfish; . . . the Christian hope of blessedness rests on an illusion that necessarily disappears in the further course of the development of consciousness." Consequently, in the Renaissance the third illusion, with its revived interest in things earthly, and its relegation of happiness to the future of the world, emerged. In bondage to this illusion we of the nineteenth century for the most part have lived, and are still living. The magnificent optimism of the Hegelian philosophy is the highest expression of this stage. But, like its predecessors, it is doomed to extinction. There is happiness neither on earth now, nor in a heaven after death, nor yet for a perfected humanity in future ages. Those who have strength to bear this conviction will therefore, as a last resort, adopt Hartmann's ethics and consciously embrace the "pessimistic career." Now, of all ethical principles Purpose is the chief. The truly moral man is he who, recognising the purpose in the world, wittingly brings himself into line with it, and strives to advance it. What, then, is this Purpose, End, or Final Cause?

We have already seen that, at the beginning, Will and Intellect were both contained in the Unconscious. But the latter was so under the domination of the former that it was unable in any measure to hinder such an exhibition of blind impulse, with its resultant misery, as the creation of the world. We have also learned that the Unconscious eternally aimed at the realisation of consciousness, for only by this means could Intellect free itself from Will. But consciousness is itself ever a conflict—ever, that is, a source of

wretchedness. So it cannot be a final end, it must be relative to something beyond itself. Consciousness, in short, is the most important agency for the consummation of the world-process. As a result, Hartmann contends, those who fully appreciate the considerations just stated have already passed from the midst of the third illusion, and are fitted to see the tremendous verity face to face. The fearful truth, now to be unveiled, has two sides. So far as concerns humanity it is this:¹ "After the three stages of illusion of the hope of a positive happiness, it [humanity] has finally seen the *folly* of its endeavour; it finally foregoes all *positive* happiness, and longs only for *absolute painlessness*, for nothingness, Nirvana. But not, as before, this or that man, but *mankind* longs for nothingness, for annihilation." And if a careful study of the facts inevitably leads to the conclusion that man was made to be miserable, with still greater force it brings home the second conviction, that in the eternal past God must have been, not blessed, but unblessed. Infinite distress—infinite, because pertaining to the Absolute Being—is the essential nature of deity. Given, then, the immanent self-torture of God, and the designed misery of man, there can be but one account of the relation between Creator and creature. The universe is "an agonising blister, which the all-pervading Being intentionally applies to himself, in the first place to draw out, and eventually to remove, an inner torture." Recognition of this overwhelming truth is the basis of moral life. Man, when he is thus instructed, will sympathise with God, and will lend aid to assuage the divine misery. The maxim of the truly pious will therefore be, "Pity God—who is

¹ Phil. of the Unconscious, vol. iii. p. 117.

a miserable devil—and live to lessen his eternal wretchedness.” “The principle of practical philosophy consists in this, TO MAKE THE ENDS OF THE UNCONSCIOUS ENDS OF OUR OWN CONSCIOUSNESS.”¹

Accordingly Hartmann, while absolute in his pessimism, is also unequivocal in his justification of life. In his eyes the asceticism and metaphysical suicide of Schopenhauer are the quintessence of folly. Does he seek deliverance, the righteous man must ever be up and doing. But doing what? Trying in his own measure to redeem God, who can only redeem the world when it has redeemed him. Finally, the redemption is to be on this wise. Selfishness, which is the product of Will, is the bane of life. This it is that bids

“The strong to drink new strength of iron endurance,
The weak new terrors ; all, renewed assurance
And confirmation of the old despair.”

Only when Intellect has overcome Will can selfishness be cast forth. Consciousness is designated as the instrument of this triumph. The Unconscious erred in creating the world, though, strangely enough, the error was an integrally valuable one. The Conscious, by negating the cause of this arch-mistake, can ensure the ultimate painlessness of the Unconscious. Man alone can at the last bring God, and himself, back to a nothingness in which the absence of pain, or aught else, is compensation sufficient for eternal self-torture and temporal woe. This thrice-blessed goal will be attained in the good time of a fine-wrought culture. Illumination, though always increasing pain, is the temporal redeeming process. Redemption itself will

¹ Phil. of the Unconscious, vol. iii. p. 133.

be at hand whenever those conditions have in this way been realised. First,¹ "that by far the *largest part* of the Unconscious Spirit manifesting itself in the present world is to be found in humanity; for only when the negative part of volition in humanity outweighs the sum of all the rest of the will objectifying itself in the organic and inorganic world, only then can the human negation of will annihilate *the whole actual volition of the world without residuum*, and cause the whole kosmos to disappear at a stroke by the withdrawal of the volition, which alone gives it existence." Second,² it is necessary "that the consciousness of mankind be *penetrated* by the folly of volition and the misery of all existence; that it have conceived so *deep a yearning* for the peace and the painlessness of non-being, and all the motives hitherto making for volition and existence have been seen through in their vanity and nothingness, that the yearning after the annihilation of volition and existence attains resistless authority as a practical motive." Thirdly, "a simultaneous common resolve" among the peoples of the earth is essential. Thus human consciousness, "being an overplus of all manifestations of the Unconscious, and so having control of the phenomenal, will one day decree self-destruction, and so bring about the annihilation of everything." The pain and misery, both of conscious man and unconscious God, will thus be removed, and the blank nothingness of pre-cosmic Nirvana will be restored to its pristine inanity.

Hartmann's four great systematic works³ afford ample

¹ Phil. of the Unconscious, vol. iii. p. 135.

² Ibid., p. 137.

³ The Philosophy of the Unconscious; The Phenomenology of the Ethical Consciousness; The Philosophy of Religion (in its two

evidence of the manner in which his early ostentatious devotion to induction is completely obliterated by the inevitable logic of the principle which he has invented. The Unconscious is obtained, by a parade of induction, from a conglomeration of physiological *phenomena*—they are not yet of the “fact” rank—which are still veiled in obscurity. It is bolstered up by a mathematical theory of probability which “is enough to make Kepler turn in his grave.” It is justified speculatively by a view of the history of philosophy, which is nothing more than a piece of special pleading. This somewhat strange induction done, the “scientific” method gives place to the most rigorous deduction. Throughout the remainder of the ‘*Philosophy of the Unconscious*,’ as in all the other works to which reference has just been made, Hartmann seeks to force this first principle upon the world, regardless alike of fact and of individuality. The process may be viewed in the chronological order of its parts.

Hegel, as we saw, did not explicitly identify ontology with cosmology, although a tendency of the kind was inherent in his system. Hartmann boldly makes the identification, and with it introduces, in a new form, the much-contemned Argument from Design. As was said, the year after its publication, of the ‘*Philosophy of the Unconscious*,’ “the astonishment which his work has caused is all the greater, inasmuch as the process by which he brings the apparently Heterogeneous into unconstrained harmony is so simple. He draws the Unconscious out of its hitherto isolated consideration—pulls it with one genial grasp (or, so to speak, at one parts). The *Philosophy of Art*, in some ways the most suggestive, may here be neglected.

stroke) at once *into systematic order*, and lights up the path upon which the edifice of a new philosophy of the Present (for which the inductive science of nature has prepared the material) is possible.”¹ Precisely. Just as the “laboratory of volition” is hidden in the Unconscious, so the same principle makes itself known in the human mind—in feeling, love, art, mysticism, and so forth. Facts are such only in the light of ontology. They are confronted, not with a simple “ultimate reality,” but their reality consists in the activity of this ultimate principle. And the same is true of men. Their history, their attainments—their character, in short—lives, moves, and has being only in the Unconscious. But the *Unconscious* *foreseeing* this, and calculating that mankind would, under such conditions, speedily cease from troubling, enlisted persons in its service by a series of well-constructed lies. Adapting words which have been used in another connection, it may be remarked, that if the *Unconscious* could have *chosen* so to behave, it would not have allowed itself to be found out by Dr von Hartmann. The *suite* of illusions, which has been already delineated, is perhaps the most conspicuous instance, in the ‘Philosophy of the Unconscious,’ of the evisceration of everything in the interests of the first principle. It opens up the way for the redaction of the universe as a whole in all its departments, according to a preconceived plan, which permits neither substantiality of fact nor characterisation of personality.

What, for example, do its ethics amount to? Instead of a sober psychological inquiry into the conditions of moral effort in individual lives, instead of a synthesis

¹ Journal of Speculative Philosophy, vol. iv. p. 85 (the italics are mine).

which sets forth the need for a common righteousness in relation to particular acts, Hartmann, as if with one sweep of the hand, unrolls the panorama of universal history. As there are progressive illusions, determinative of humanity as a whole, so there are ethical stages which guarantee the kind of the moral evolution of this or that person — he is environed by a definite age. Naturally—that is, through the inevitable operation of the Unconscious—humanity must pass through three moral periods. At first men were used to seek pleasure for themselves, they were egoistic. Now, for the most part, they are ruled by the external authority of law enforced upon them by the state to which they belong — they are heteronomous. Some few have to-day reached the third stage, upon which all will at a future time enter consciously. Then mankind will be autonomous. Men will find their autonomy in submitting themselves to the behests of the Unconscious. This in its entirety is typical of the realistic tendency. There is hardly a trace of matter for individual morality; indeed the whole discussion concerns the character of the evolution of mankind, and is much more careful about the due division into epochs than with respect to the single life of any person in any distinct period. To the final stage attaches some appearance of an approach to the consideration of actual lives. But the moment it is analysed, the autonomy is found to be a delusion. It is a provision, not for this person or that, but for the Unconscious. The pervasive principle permits a man to call himself autonomous, when he has dedicated himself to certain well-defined ends, and to these only. They, in turn, have literally nothing to connect them with *his* particular view of right living, they possess no

relation to his devotion to righteousness, because they are simple qualities of an impersonal force, which compels him to such ends whether he will or not. The utter absence of psychological consideration is well illustrated by the failure to observe that a very simple psychological objection hoists this grand scheme with its own petard. It is a psychological absurdity that any sane man can devote his life to the furtherance of certain ends which presuppose the infinite selfishness of God, and which, as avowedly, are in themselves empty.

The ethical scheme already referred to is carried out with characteristic system and fulness in Hartmann's second major work, the 'Phenomenology of the Ethical Consciousness.' The succession of moral ideas or phenomena, as the title indicates, forms the subject of discussion, and to this there is added a division containing Hartmann's theory of *absolute* morality. As usual, the redaction is quasi-historical. Self-love characterises Greek and Pagan ethics generally. Heteronomy reached its height under the feudal and ecclesiastical conditions of the middle ages. In both cases happiness is the end desired. To the Greeks and Pagans this meant happiness for the individual in the present life. In mediæval times it implied principally happiness in another world. Hence heteronomy. For the conception of happiness in another world was only possible on the presupposition that certain preliminary conditions were observed by man here. The contract, as it were, could not be sealed until a revelation of the requisite conditions had been given. This revelation was forthcoming in Christianity, and an external ethical authority was thus imposed upon mankind. No doubt the grandiose

sweep of this plan is fascinating. The wholly indefensible conception of the Christian religion, which is represented as an external code, is, however, alone a perfectly sufficient piece of self-criticism. If this be all that the successive consideration of the Family, the State, the Church, and God's will lead to, the value of the long-drawn process may well be questioned. This inability to adopt facts which, unfortunately, do not tally with the system, is displayed, not only in the general discussion just noted, but also in the more concrete inquiries which the book contains. Its second, and chief, division is professedly a treatment of the moral consciousness as it is seen in the individual. Here, as before, psychology is eschewed, and Hartmann occupies himself altogether with the immediate relation of moral judgments to personal wellbeing. Throughout, the analogy from æsthetics is pressed, and this, I think, is a plain illustration of that inability to understand what an ethical question is, which is so plentifully evinced in the work. Taste and feeling, as well as reason, are said to enter into moral judgments. But the two former, being concrete, have no moral value except as they subserve an end. The moral law is an abstraction that provides the end towards which they work. The general idea of an end, designed somehow or other, is thus the *ultima ratio* of morality. This, of course, because nothing else would fit the system. But one may be pardoned for failing to perceive precisely how this affords either an account of individual morality, or any materials out of which a person could construct a moral consciousness with its devotion to particular ends, and its healthful activity in particular cases. The idea is that an end in general reduces special lives to

harmony. This is tenable in the sense that it brings about a solidarity of effort. But it is insufficient—it does not touch moral questions, in that it has nothing to say with regard to the actions of an individual as such. And without this, end in general plus its harmony cannot be formulated, much less realised. The end, once more, which the presence of reason implies, has taken various forms, each one gradually supplanting its predecessors. The happiness of the society in which one moves, and the advancement of culture in mankind as a whole, are mentioned as two aspects of the end. The one has reference to men at a given stage, the other to humanity as a gradually developing unity. The former provides for the present, the latter, in the light of the past, for the future. In both cases equally Hartmann draws attention to the implied sublation of self in a larger whole. The tendency is realistic, and insistence is always laid upon the impersonal end at the expense of the individuals, who both conceive it and are realising it. This appears immediately the discussion of the two aspects of the moral design is completed.

Social eudæmonism is constantly endangered by relapse into egoistic hedonism. The mere evolution of culture is too external to the individual to secure his unswerving devotion. A monistic metaphysic must therefore be forthcoming to effect a synthesis. First principles must be sought, by the aid of which the individual may be essentially united with absolute power. Throughout, not only has the discussion been predominately realistic, but the conscious purpose is to set up at last a cast-iron system from which none can escape. The desiderated metaphysic thus leads to those conclu-

sions : (1) All individuals are identical, the doctrine of monism ; (2) all individuals are in essence one with the Absolute Spirit, the doctrine of religion ; (3) the end of the absolute is inevitably the end of the individuals also, the doctrine of the absolute ; (4) to submerge the happiness of self in order to promote the happiness of the absolute is the highest morality, the doctrine of redemption. The obliteration of personality, which implies the impersonality of morality, is the one consistent point in this curious analysis. Man having made the incredible discovery that God is in his hands, is to frame, for this unthinkable *punctum*, a rule of life which shall accord at once with the universal civilised order, and with all the countless disorders which cannot but occur in the career of one person—a number endlessly manifolded in the lives of all men ! The result of this exclusive realism is in nowise different from that which one expects it to be. Hartmann has written a lengthy volume to elucidate the value of life. Now the value of life consists precisely in the kind of living whereby men impart worth to existence. But this kind of living is either denied or is sublated in some impersonal irresponsible agency. Consequently, at the end of the search, the moral conduct of an entire universe is found to be—nothing, nothing to infinity. Universalism here overbalances itself. The calculation on which it proceeds has been shown to be at once impossible and useless.¹ Having extracted everything from persons as moral agents, Hartmann tells them to moralise themselves for nothing. Little wonder that they should treat moralisation as a monstrous jest, and

¹ Cf. Pfeleiderer's masterly review in the *Neuen Reich*, 1879 (Nos. 29 and 30).

go their several ways, forgetting what manner of men they are. Only a deliberate denial of the fact that individuals differ endlessly could render the method proposed workable. That is, it could not be brought to being save at the expense of truth.

Further, even could this difficulty be removed, its existence and application would be of no use. For it consists of a rationalism based upon eudæmonism. The former comes to be adopted on condition that the latter has already been applied in an evaluation of the universe. But eudæmonism has nothing to do with absolute morality; consequently, the calculation on which pessimistic rationalism bases its claim is without meaning. Hope for happiness is the moral content of entire past history; hope for happiness is not truly moral; absolute morality consists in hope for a happiness which has no content. The arbitrariness of the method the artificiality of its passages from feeling to taste, and from both to the moral judgment of reason, its mysticism, and, above all, its harsh deductive dogmatism, differentiate it sharply from the 'Philosophy of the Unconscious.' The ingenuity of the last was astounding, though often *pour rire*; the pathology of this is always *pour pleurer*. Let alone the strange disregard of the sphere of moral inquiry, the theory itself falls to pieces of its own falsity. As an apology for moral bankruptcy it is admirable; in any other view, so far as concerns ethics, no judgment can be passed upon it. There is nothing to judge.

In the 'Religious Consciousness of Mankind in the Successive Steps of its Development' Hartmann essays a similar task for religion. He sets about his work in much the same way as before. His method is largely

quasi-historical, and facts are forced to render themselves subservient to a preconceived plan. As there were three illusions, and three stages of morality, so there are two principal kinds of religion—each embracing several species—ere we arrive at the final consummation in pessimism. The animals possess no religion, but tend to evince religious qualities. With man there is, first, Naturalism, which passes through several developments of henotheism; and this includes, not only what we have been always accustomed to regard as the typically naturalistic religions, but also the higher systems of Greece, Egypt, Rome, and of Persian Parseeism. Its evolution effected, Supernaturalism follows, with its three great stages, of Brahmanism and Buddhism—called Abstract Monism; of Judaism and Christianity—known indifferently as monotheism and theism; and of the Hartmannian religion of emancipation. Here, as in the ethical sphere, everything is sacrificed to a redaction according to an immanent principle. The disregard of time—surely one of the prime conditions of evolution—is nothing less than astounding. Facts, no matter what their historical order, are tossed topsy-turvy and compelled to fill places which, if there be an evolution, they could not in the nature of the case have occupied. Scarcely less startling, and perhaps calling for more attention on account of the manner in which it is forced into notice, is the psychology upon which Hartmann relies. Brute beasts are subjected to an impossible mental analysis, and by a carefully concealed analogy they are endued with qualities such as appear only in civilised men. Of a piece with this is the cleverly constructed, but wholly inadequate, treatment accorded to early

man. As in the 'Philosophy of the Unconscious,' so here, facts which are as yet but imperfectly ascertained or understood are either chosen to bear the burden of an entire system, or are so trimmed that they finally seem to fit the scheme. There is, in short, an unprecedented mixing of three separate departments, each of which has its own proper sphere and method. And this indiscriminate procedure is intentionally followed in order to buttress a special theory. It is an attempt, as daring as unsuccessful, to make empiricism look as if it possessed religious affinities.

Hartmann has forgotten that, while it is true that philosophy seeks to take the facts of religion as they are historically, it is also true that their simple colligation is not its special task. The conflict between the statements, that "the origin of Religion is a philosophical question," and that "the origin of religion cannot be determined by speculation," is apparent, not real. Working backwards through the recorded events of history, it may be possible to arrive at the precise point where religion appeared. But, even were this highly problematical success achieved, it would affect, not the origin of religion, but the circumstances of its historical apparition. And this distinction is fundamental. An empirical philosophy of religion is impossible, because it would have regard only to religious phenomena, their order, and grouping. Of course, no one denies that a very valuable department of research exists which may perhaps be so styled. But it is preferable to term it, with Burnouf, the science of religions, or, with Reville, the history of religions. This fascinating study is a department complete in itself. Its aim, like its method, is peculiar to itself as contrasted with philosophy of

religion. The desire is, in the first place, to collect by strict search the scattered phenomena which are referable to the religious consciousness in all ages; and second, to collate them in such a manner that they may furnish sufficient foundation for certain inductions. The historical method, for example, exhibits the succession of religions, and on this basis attempts to find a principle of unity among them. The comparative method lays religions side by side, in order to discover their similarities and discrepancies by inspection. But, prior to the faithful exercise of either method, a sufficient science of religions must take other considerations into account. Religions as a whole have in the course of their history been modified by certain ascertainable conditions. Climate, race, and the external limitations imposed by hostile peoples, as in the case of the Jews and the like, all demand due attention. Such questions cannot be treated *a priori*; they do not lend themselves to interpretation prescribed by a ready-made formula or plan. The object of history or science of religions is to put the facts in a position to speak for themselves, and, having heard them, to determine within the given limits what conclusions possess a fair show of reason. The inferences thus drawn might reveal, say, a unity of rites in the great historical religions, and they might assign causes for this development. As a final result, an exhaustive classification of religious phenomena might be carried out, and the connection between religions themselves, and between them and the other accompaniments of human progress, might thus be determined.

But, as has been said, research of this kind has its own sphere, and pursues its own methods. The sphere

is not that of philosophy, nor are the processes in vogue those of speculation. The science or history of religions may deal with the origin of religion in so far as this can be empirically viewed. But it leaves its legitimate place and ceases to be either scientific or historical whenever it attempts to compass ultimate truths. The phenomena which it collects and arranges are most indispensable. But they do not exhaust all that can, and indeed must, be said about religion. A period invariably arises, come it late or early, when inquiry, pushing aside the veil of recorded phenomena, tries to elicit their inner spirit. All the facts with one accord bear witness to the effort of man to rise to a worthy conception of the ultimate Being, and, in its light, to render him fitting service. The fitting service, with its form of worship, and its attendant sentiments or emotions, is peculiar to the sphere of religion proper. But the cognition of God, and the conception of his nature, which are the presuppositions of such service, are the conditions of there being any facts for the science or history of religions to record. And when it is asked, Of what nature are these conditions, and to what conclusions affecting man and the world as a whole do they point? we have left science and history of religions, and have arrived at philosophy of religion, which does not indeed try to determine the origin of religion, but seeks to show on what it must inevitably be based. The science of religions may tell a great deal about gods and views of God; it has no direct interest in the theistic problem as such. Such interest philosophy has from its very nature. The one treats the question as if it had never been asked; to the other falls the task of systematically considering the evidence for the being

of God, and of exhibiting the essential nature of deity in so far as it finds expression in the human spirit. While the science of religions interprets the external, philosophy of religion passes to the internal in order to discover *why* the phenomenon called religion exists. The Absolute Being, man's knowledge of him, and of his nature, are subjects to the investigation of which only the study of first principles, in its highest department, is adequate. If religion be essential to a rational intelligence like man, the last word on the matter must rest with philosophy.

Philosophy of religion must, no doubt, address itself to the question, What is to be deduced from the facts of religion? And this is Hartmann's desire. It is necessary, not merely to elucidate the idea of the absolute, but also to exhibit the ultimate sanction of religion, to discuss the problems of evil, of freedom, and of immortality—in short, to view man's general relationship to the Absolute Being as it has been successively conceived in the course of religious development. For this purpose, philosophy must treat the totality of religious phenomena irrespective of their order in history. But it presupposes that order, as supplying the facts in which the unity of principle lies embedded. Philosophy of religion thus stands in one relation to the history of religions, in another to the manifestations of religion regarded in their unity as "Religion." Hereupon two questions suggest themselves. With respect to history it may be asked, Can philosophy of religion reduce history of religions to symmetrical order by an *a priori* method? With regard to Religion, and especially with regard to Christianity, it must be inquired, Has Religion anything to

fear from philosophical discussion of it? The former of these alone has interest for us here.

The succession of religious manifestations has as much factual reality, and appeals to the mind with as great objective force, as the succession of battles, of monarchs, or of revolutions. On the whole, if the earliest religions be excepted, the story of religious ebullition is as well ascertained as that of any other *suite* of historical facts. In spite of efforts that have been made to put a contrary practice into operation, it is impossible to rid one's self of these circumstances. They form the material on which philosophy of religion must depend. The object, say, of philosophy of history is not to come to the recorded occurrences, with an *a priori* formula to which they must perforce conform, but is rather to seek among the given facts, principles of connection which have existence and can be known only through the medium of phenomena. So, too, philosophy of religion misses its vocation if it arm itself with an architectonic of religion, into which, whatever be their special peculiarities, the different religions must fit. To cut and trim the past in order that it may square with theory, is to substitute an unreal logical movement for ascertained occurrence, or to replace history with the figments of individual imagination. Philosophy must patiently hear the history of religion, and then, having thus ascertained the facts, probe them in order to discover what they ultimately mean. Should the events testify to the presence of a principle of development, well and good. They are not to be forced to tally with such a principle; it must be found in them, not thrust upon them. No doubt, philosophy of religion brought much discredit upon itself, in its

earlier stages, because it attempted, on the basis of an altogether inadequate apprehension of history, to make it testify to a strange process of antithetic movement. This, however, does not affect the point now at issue. History of religions cannot be presented according to an *a priori* redaction conducted by philosophy. The task of philosophy is, having accepted the facts, to comprehend them in their totality, in order to learn their ultimate ground and significance.

Philosophy of religion is doing its proper work only when it unravels a general notion of religion from among a multitude of phenomena which can be characterised as religious by its presence alone. The constitutive principle is not a product of the facts, but is recognised in them when they are subjected to a philosophical method of treatment. Unquestionably, there are dangers in the application of this method. Granted, for instance, that a development be traceable in religious phenomena, a tendency may display itself, as with Hartmann, to determine the place of any one religion solely by reference to the transcendental idea of religion. This is not satisfactory. The transcendental general idea is certainly indispensable to the recognition of this or that phenomenon as religious. But this is not to say that the phenomenon is thereby built into some position for which it has not in itself any particular fitness. The fitting must be done, not by an appeal to the *a priori* general notion, but to the presentation of the notion by the fact or group of facts in question. Hegel's complete failure to account for Islam, and to characterise Buddhism or Brahmanism adequately, was due, not only to the imperfect state of knowledge at the time, but also to his attempt to force

these religions into a scheme, in which the first had no organic place, and into which the others fitted only after much unwarrantable preparation. Reason is present in all religion *quâ* Religion, but the kind of its presentation is determined historically by the religions themselves, not by the common element. "It is not the mind that understands God, it is the life that makes us understand Him."

Experience is the basis; but there is no experience without mental processes, and this points to elements, even in religion, which philosophy alone, as the science of ultimate reality, can fully and systematically explain. Philosophy of religion is not concerned to construct either history or religion; but it belies itself if it do not struggle to set forth the implicit reason of both.

Returning from this digression, in which we have tried to indicate Hartmann's unphilosophical procedure in mixing indiscriminately different departments of research, it may be said that the main vice of the Hegelian philosophy is incident to his view with tenfold intensity. Religion is not only judged as if it were purely intellectual, but that in it which *is* intellectual has come to be deemed alone worthy of criticism. The test which we would here apply in exhibition of this is Hartmann's treatment of Christianity. It is assumed that the religion of Jesus is shut up in a certain series of dogmas, and that, on the dissolution of these, the cult has done its work. This view, needless to say, rests on misconception of our religion. Still, as it is essential to the pessimistic plan, it must be carried out. It has to be enforced. Hartmann tries to show that the religion of the Jews was at first purely naturalistic, and that it gradually came to be transcendent. It

passed over into the religion of that aspect of the absolute impersonal deity known as the Father. The Father, in his transcendence, lost touch with earth. And in order to reopen communication the Platonising Jews invented the *Logos*, which was the masculine form of the Greek *Sophia*.¹ In Christianity this *Logos* was finally identified with the Son²—Christianity itself being the religion of that aspect of the single impersonal God known as the Son. But this personification of the Son made it difficult to understand how salvation was to be wrought out. How could persons participate in another person's godliness? To overcome this crux, religionists invented the Spirit. This was given to Christ by the Father, and through him to others. After a little this Spirit too became personalised, affording that aspect of the one impersonal God known as the Holy Ghost. Nothing to my mind is more conclusive regarding the futility of Hartmann's transcendental scheme than the mere putting of the question just cited. No man who is in such a state of mind as to be able to ask himself how one can participate in the personality of Christ, is in a position to throw light upon the meaning of religion as such. He has not yet received his passport to the world in which religious affinities play an essential part. Still less is one who answers the question with a display of learning and ingenuity, which would be whimsical were it not for its graceless blasphemy. But this treatment of Christianity is necessary, in order that Hartmann may rid himself of what he patronisingly calls "the sweet Galilean vision."

¹ Cf. *Das religiöse Bewuss.*, pp. 468 *sq.*

² *Ibid.*, pp. 564 *sq.*, and 589 *sq.*

The trinitarian doctrine, of which this ingenious outline has just been given, came, however, to be *intellectually* untenable. The time was then at hand when the third "person" in the Trinity would swallow up the other two, and in so doing restore the pristine impersonality of which it was but an aspect. This reasoning is on a par with that which has reference to the redemption of the world. Man, a phenomenon, is by his act to bring back the absolute reality; the Spirit, an "aspect," is by its power to reinstate, *quâ* deity, that of which it is an aspect. Realism here falls into pure and simple irrationalism. And this is typical of the treatment accorded to history throughout. As in the ethical sphere, so here, individual life is not touched at all, and fact is abused, not used. Formalism, ignorance of the conclusions of modern research, a superficial acquaintance with religions, and no sympathetic feeling for them, mark the interpretation. The intellectualism is so overstrained that it seeks to reduce Christianity to a mere concatenation of discursive formulæ. Yet this very intellect is the chief means whereby Hartmann rids himself of Christianity, and then proceeds to construct a new religion of spirit, which is to take the place of the *historical* faith just dismissed.

The 'Religion of Spirit' is the work in which Hartmann outlines the foundations and main principles of this new philosophical religion. As a whole, his argument is not so offensive as in the former books, and it has an air of solidity, due chiefly to the fact that redaction of history is absent, and a brand-new edifice is being gradually put together. This does not, however, emancipate it from some of the most serious objections to which pure deductions are always liable,

An analysis of religious phenomena "in-and-for-themselves" is given, and upon this the superstructure is raised. Psychology, Metaphysics, and Ethics of religion constitute the respective divisions of the inquiry. The first of these is discussed with refreshing sobriety.¹ Psychologically, faith is the purely human function in religion. In it idea, feeling, and will find union, and the various "lop-sided" religious manifestations—like intellectualism, mystic exaltation, and moralism—are thus avoided. Religion consists neither in morality touched with emotion, nor in simple admiration, nor yet in mere aspiration. It is a phenomenon of man's consciousness, and therefore implies certain psychological powers. In especial, the element of feeling, which some philosophers have implicitly eliminated, ought to have its rightful prominence. This insistence upon feeling, as opposed to idea, leads Hartmann by an obvious path to the consideration of will, and here he concentrates his energy. "The religious will," he says,² "is the *alpha* and *omega* of all religion; as unconscious will, its first cause, as conscious, its final goal. Without the unconscious religious motive to raise one from dependence upon the world to freedom in God, without the unconscious longing after the divine, which is satisfied with even the relatively most unfitting objects for the building up of a religious relationship, the evolution of religion in man would have been impossible; even those who regard the goal of this intense longing as illusory must admit that. . . . Of religion before all things it may be said: 'By their fruits ye shall know them;'³ first of all, action, or, psychologically considered, the will to act, is the fruit,

¹ Cf. *Rel. des Geistes*, pp. 1-112.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 55, 56.

which must serve as a criterion of the value of all religious functions."

On the other hand, all religion rests upon the ideal of deity. Hence, corresponding to the human function, there must be a divine. This Hartmann describes as grace. Like faith, it has three aspects—as revealing, redeeming, and sanctifying. Without entering into the merits of this trichotomy, it may be said that the author has no right to it. According to his theory, God is known only in the phenomena of conscious spirits, and of matter organic and inorganic. An analysis of the function of God is thus, on his own admission, impossible. Throughout, the discussion is far more reasonable than anything given since the 'Philosophy of the Unconscious.' It is vitiated, however, by an assumption which warps the whole. "As the willing and knowing of the individual must be real, partial functions of the absolute willing and knowing, in order to be truly within its sphere, so also must the constant groups of functions which constitute the reality of the individual have their subsistence in the absolute actuality of the divine Being, and not in themselves, so as not to represent a Being outside the divine Being, but rather to be *momenta* of the absolute idea and the absolute will in each of their single actions." There is a constant straining to keep up to this assumption, as it were. The subjective course of religion runs too smooth. There is no evidence of the deep disturbances which take place when a great religious personality "claps wings to all the solid old lumber of the world." The principle behind the phenomena is at work, and the phenomena therefore pale: we feel that the explanation is too easy; it does not provide for difficulties.

The usual see-saw of absolutism appears here. The individual is endowed with personality, only that it may be wrenched from him—this, indeed, is the condition of his ever being able to have it. Man, as we have just found Hartmann saying, is to be in the divine Being. Yet there is the other side. "The reality of suffering, and thereby the reality of man and of the persons and things that work upon him, is the indispensable postulate of the religious consciousness, without which the latter can only attempt to maintain itself by self-contradictions."

This, however, is a portion of the metaphysics of religion. These are succinctly summed up when it is said that man as such has an essential power of self-determination. But this essence is part of the absolute spirit, though without prejudice to the actuality of self-hood. In this way, on the human side, man is laden with responsibility for God; while, on the divine side, God is enabled to make demands of man. Always, notice, the emphasis is upon the realistic principle. The fact that religion implies certain functions, human and divine, proves God's existence. Analysis of human nature in relation to the external world, analogically reveals the *kind* of God's existence. Finally, the historical development of morals and religion exhibit God's purpose with the world, and point to the nature of the redemption for which each is to work. If the world and all its conscious inhabitants be racked by pains, God, because he is wholly what they are partly, must be infinitely more tortured. Consequently the religious consciousness postulates "eudæmonological pessimism" and "teleological optimism." But with teleology we are in the ethical sphere. Accordingly,

in the third division—the Ethics of Religion—Hartmann tries to show how religion must end in a redemption from evil in which both the separate persons and the All-one cannot but participate. He takes the former first, and traces the subjective growth of moralised religion.¹ This consists in a gradual realisation by man of the nature and needs of immanent spirit. He recognises God in himself, he comes to know the divine necessity intimately, and so he dedicates himself as a willing instrument. Atonement is the negative state which implies deliverance from experienced pain, which is sin. It does no more for a man than *remove* unhappiness; nothing new is substituted. Redemption, in other words, is not a gift from God to man, it is the subjective side of a process which can only be completed when it actualises itself objectively. Man must do something with this subjective state of his—must do something for God.

Here at last we are presented with the new Religion of Spirit. Its main characteristic is its vagueness. Rites and symbols, acts of adoration and places of worship, will be improved away. “It is the task of the highest stage of religious consciousness (that of the religion of immanence) to separate in worship also what is essential from what is unessential, and to realise what has hitherto been aimed at in a roundabout fashion, by means of externalities and illusions, in a more perfect way, by applying directly to that which is the kernel of the matter.” The New Jerusalem of the Scriptures is to be realised after a manner on earth: “I saw no temple there.” But when one looks into the matter a little closely, the ordinary

¹ Cf. *Rel. des Geistes*, p. 282 *sq.*

vice of the latter-day system-maker quickly discloses itself. Such a "religion" is possible, because man has recognised that he is inhabited by the "Eternal Word." God is part and parcel of his nature, nay, he is the reality of human life. Hence each must serve deity by worshipping the revelation which he bears in himself. This is the essence, and it requires neither sacrifice, prayer, nor devotion. Being filled with the Unconscious, man finds the true ethic of religion in recognising his own fulness, and in trying to give objective effect to the subjectively perceived ends which this, his ultimate selfhood, imparts to him. The Religion of Spirit will be complete when, by the devotion of his creatures, who are himself, the Absolute has, along with them, ceased to be. The end, that is, cannot be realised, being organic to a continuous process, which, in order to achieve completion, must vanish into vacuity.

VI. The Defects of Hartmann's Theory.

No one will feel surprise that a callous and unrelieved atheism of this sort should have called forth many indignant protests and contemptuous references. "Miserable nonsense;" "merely a deepened phase of the materialistic spirit;" "frivolity and pretence;" "a preposterous attempt to construe the absolute by mere pictorial thinking;" "the grotesque absurdity of what we may call the Blister or Poultice Theory of the Universe," are a few of the choicer epithets with which it has been saluted. But a system of such scope and pretension is not to be shivered in a sentence. It is easy to carp at Hartmann: he is to be answered only

by an investigation of the principles which he regards as fundamental to his *Weltanschauung*.

Before attempting to indicate several *cruces* of his system, one may admit without loss of advantage that it is not entirely devoid of good points. Emerging at a specific stage in the progress of ethical culture, it is an attempt to solve the problem of the universe on certain premisses, and as such it has served to clear the philosophical air. Pessimism in general, and a deftly articulated scheme like Hartmann's in particular, will ever be as balm to those oppressed with the mystery of life. It does not wound the *amour propre* of the sad. For, in effect, the insolubility of their difficulty is affirmed by the allegation that there is no mystery about it. The harsh facts of the work-a-day world are ostensibly taken as the basis of a theory which dogmatically declares that they explain themselves. Life is; let it *not be*, and all will be well. The problem is thus abolished without ceremony. For those unfitted by temperament to accept a more joyful philosophy, this theory is not altogether without value. To some egoists "a sad mood opens a wider mental horizon than joy." Rousseau's contemporary representatives had far better live to lessen the agony of the Unconscious than spend their hours in morbid self-analysis.

Turning now to another consideration; if the philosophy of the Unconscious have this historico-social advantage, its service to theoretical inquiry is at least as important. Hartmann has in any case helped to dispel misunderstandings concerning the three great problems of philosophy — God, the world, and man. He has demonstrated what even Strauss, in his later period, dared not face. For he has not feared to show

that, if the Absolute Being be impersonal, the gospel of despair necessarily follows. Pessimism has taken its place as the inevitable sequel to a theology which finds deity in Will, or in the Unconscious, in Force, or in any principle devoid of selfhood and rationality. It appears, not only that no man can see God and live, but also that no man can be truly human without seeing God—and dying. For, as Jean Paul has said, “No one in Nature is so alone as the denier of God. He mourns with an orphaned heart, that has lost its great Father, by the corpse of Nature, which no World-Spirit moves and holds together, and which grows in its grave; and he mourns by that corpse until he himself crumbles off it.” Hartmann has demonstrated the truth of this saying with a fertility and conclusiveness that are not likely to be equalled. Secondly, he has shown, as regards the world, that the old, old story—the patriarchal notion of the Jews—of a perfection to be found within the limits of the life terrestrial, can only issue in contradiction. The modern Job, he takes the same ground as his unknown prototype, and comes to the same conclusion: “Let the day perish wherein I was born. . . . Why died I not from the womb? . . . For now I should have lain still and been quiet.” If this life come from nothing and be fated to return thither again, its utter vanity and emptiness cannot be hid. It is a fragment that circles far from any unity into which it may be fitted. If God be nature and nought else, if the record of history be the only theophany, then the failures of the past are the essence of the present, and its inherited defect, in turn, is the measure of such promise as the future bears. It were infinitely better to make an end of all. The best is bad, and the

worst but retards the spread of the bad best. Thirdly, with respect to man, Hartmann has inculcated a most valuable lesson. Contemporary civilisation has developed certain tendencies with which he, as a soldier and one of a nation under arms, is acquainted at first hand. The intensity or "high pressure" of life prevalent to-day, although a result of individual freedom, is fraught at the same time with no little disregard of individuality. The members of the industrial, like the units of the regular army, are identified by numbers. In the huge aggregations of men, now so common, the individual is but a single too-easily-replaced particle. The soldier is cast adrift when he has served his time, the sick or broken-down artisan is forgotten. The practical increase of misery thus occasioned has a theoretical consequent. As the individual falls a prey to hopelessness, if neglected by the society for which he laboured, so the person who disregards the social medium, to which he owes so much, cherishes bitterness. Hartmann has pointed out, once for all it may be hoped, that self, just because of its utter nakedness, is the real cause of man's misery. "What is our whole civilisation being wrecked upon," exclaimed Wagner, "but on the want of Love?"¹ Meat still comes from the eater and sweetness from the strong. Perfection and imperfection have a common source. Man actually has it in him to produce either. And Hartmann is to be thanked for telling the world so plainly that self-

¹ Wagner's debt to Schopenhauer is well known. But he was much nearer Christianity than his master. "Parsifal" is perhaps the finest embodiment of the union of "love" and pessimism—*e.g.*, the lines of the great chorus—

"Heiles höchstes Wunder,
Erlösung dem Erlöser!"

seeking is the sure path to self-destruction, and that the pursuit of a visionary happiness here implies a stifling of the aspiration upon which even the fruition of the painless void hereafter depends. Reaching forth for mere enjoyment requires a life of selfish egoism. But egoism is a delusion, and can be realised only when the blank vacuity of self has been imparted to all things. The new delusion, of redemption by annihilation, is no more than this selfishness come full circle. "We should honour too highly," as E. Pfleiderer has admirably said, "that mode of wisdom called Pessimism, if we assented to the multitude, and considered it as anything more than an apparent systematising of that bad humour which afflicts the many *blâsé* minds of our highly nervous century,—as being a really new and epoch-making view of the universe at large. The moral disease to which our age is subject, an indolent eudæmonism, has found expression in it. This, and this alone, is the reason for that wealth of applause from a multitude of like-minded men, of which this tendency in thinking loves complacently to boast."

Taken as a whole, Hartmann's systematic pessimism is vulnerable on several sides. Unlike some other philosophies, it can be attacked, not only at its starting-point, but also at several stages in its constructive progress. Some of the points may be briefly indicated.

1. Even granted that the *a posteriori* method of arriving at the Unconscious be conclusive or satisfactory, it may be asked whether the Unconscious itself is a sufficient principle of Monism. Is it possible, for example, to derive consciousness from it? Again, if Will and Intellect be thus contained in the Unconscious, can it be rationally shown that they

really issue from it, the one in the form of things, the other in the form of thought? And if this be proved, as Hartmann evidently thinks that it has been, is not the Unconscious thereby endowed with all the attributes and powers which the theist alone is entitled to attach to the Absolute Being?

2. Pessimism contains a metaphysical absurdity. Apart altogether from its mystic attempt to unite teleology with the ethics of annihilation, its method of creating the desired Nirvana is not reassuring. Hartmann is, from one point of view, a zealous natural realist, as his chapters on matter and organism attest. Yet, notwithstanding this, he avails himself of the baldest solipsism in order to picture the consummation of terrestrial conscious life. So far as the theory goes, mankind doubtless might negate the will to live. But, if the earth have a reality of its own, this act would not destroy it. Indeed the result might conceivably be the resubjugation of Intellect to Will, by the restitution of the state which obtained before the rise of consciousness. It could not possibly be the desiderated removal of the universe. Nor is this affected by Hartmann's belief in the phenomenality of the world, for this reality is admitted to exist apart from the phenomenal reality of thought.

3. Thirdly, there is the ethical difficulty. Pessimism possesses a moral theory which is dependent upon a teleological view of the world. That is to say, Hartmann pretends that activity has a value all its own, because it is helping towards the realisation of a certain ideal. But he tells us that the ideal is nothingness. The contradiction is plain, it is also inseparable from the position. On his premisses, Hartmann can-

not legitimately do more than show that life is a treadmill. It is simply a continuous process. This indeed he does point out. But he is unable to explain towards what the progress is, or how it takes place. When he says that the end is nothingness, he is so far consistent — the whole matter is confessed inexplicable. But it is absurd to declare that the harmonious conception of life, towards which man continually reaches forth, is a blank inanity, and at the same time to allege that this is a satisfactory explanation of growth in moral excellence. Morality is essentially optimistic, and it is not removing or negating this optimism to say that it occupies a subordinate place in a world-process which exists only for pessimistic ends. To assume that moral life is imbued with a principle of advance, and at the same time to deny the absolute value of that life, and of its end, is a contradiction in terms. The complete evasion of the problem of evil is but another aspect of this method. The consciousness of liberty, and the law of necessity, are equally unmeaning under a theory which speaks only in terms of happiness and misery.

4. Keeping still within the ethical sphere, Pessimism makes one large assumption in its treatment of man's moral nature. The balance-sheet of pleasures and pains, it is alleged, will exhibit the exact moral value of any ethical life. If indeed man is to be forthwith degraded from the spiritual to the sensational level, if the utilitarian view be correct, then Hartmann's ethics are not without truth, and are more inspiring than those deemed satisfactory by some English thinkers. But if it can be shown, as it has often been recently, that it is unreasonable to explain a human life hedonist-

ically, then Pessimism is built upon an assumption which has no foundation in fact. If life be of any worth whatever, its value is with highest probability independent of the hedonist calculus. Moreover, even could the utilitarian standpoint be proved tenable, Hartmann takes some further liberties, respecting which inquiry would be essential. It would have to be asked, for instance, if pleasures are relative to pains in the sense that they are experienced only when a painful state has come to an end; if the continuous desire of Will finds but slight satisfaction even in the most exquisite pleasures; if, from the very constitution of consciousness, pleasure in the aggregate must always be overbalanced by pain; and if the essential dissatisfaction of consciousness has inevitably foreclosed the possibility of compensating gratification. Hartmann, in short, bolsters up his hedonistic assumption with a psychological system which is at issue with the conclusions of the most accredited research.

5. Finally, the metaphysical and ethical frailty of the theory results in its inadequacy as a philosophy of religion. The nature of Will, as already explained, and the total expulsion of sensibility, forced Hartmann to regard religion as an intellectual manifestation. The weakness therefore is, that the religious consciousness is not properly analysed. As a consequence, its historical manifestations are wrenched from their factual environment, set in false relations, and so forced to bear conclusions with which they have but slight connection. "The load of earth's sorrow" disguises the "sting of earth's sin," with the result that the vice of intellectualism which so characterised the Hegelian Left is repeated with far greater intensity. Were we

nothing but thinking machines we should have no religion. But, despite Hartmann, the wise man who thinks about the good without trying to incarnate it is as impossible to-day as he was in the time of the Roman Stoics.

In conclusion, one or two considerations may be advanced respecting the ethical argument against Hartmann's pessimism. It is perhaps of more general interest than the others.

The aim of a moral theory is not so much to prescribe moral duties as to

"Set free the spirit alike in all,
Discovering the true laws by which the flesh
Bars in the spirit."

Hartmann has so far conformed to this conception, that he has attempted to show what the world is, and, on this metaphysical basis, to rationalise morality. Metaphysic states the *conditio sine qua non* of ethics. Now, the first characteristic of moral life is its evident connection with reason. Hartmann himself allows that the *ideal* of annihilation is at once the final and efficient cause of "cultured piety." So far, then, he has points in common with recent ethical thinkers. Whether he does not seek to possess himself of these advantages in order to turn them into disadvantages is another matter. It is agreed, then, that ethical theory seeks to find the environment of moral effort, and having done so, to frame a complete account of it. The chief permanent condition of moral life is personality—rational selfhood. Will, the power by which reason manifests itself in action, is a personal possession. Choice of alternatives, for example, points to an indi-

vidual preference for which I, the "impervious" self, am alone responsible. The moral career takes place within the limits of this selfhood. I am the immanent sustainer of all my acts, and they are the results of my presentation to myself of my own selfhood, as bettered or made worse by the contemplated deed. In other words, the individual, as a moral being, seeks to find, at the end of his activity, the same self which was present at the beginning, but developed or idealised by the process. Personality is thus at once the whole of human life and its law. By its very nature it implies progress. Just as the acorn is the oak *in posse*, so man is innately able to rise to higher life. Self-development is the corollary to possession of a self. Did a man's "reach not exceed his grasp," he would not be the being that he is. And the interval between grasp and reach is filled up with moral acts which imply an outgoing of individuality towards an identical yet better self. This ideal, again, is a projection of actualised personality. It is thus that "the dominant influence of life lies ever in the unrealised."¹ But this is not all. Progress is further conditioned by the surroundings in which alone personality can subsist. Man, as a single soul, is the subject of a double movement. As we have just seen, there is a movement proceeding outwards from the self. Were this the only one, however, the individual would soon empty his nature. There is also a motion from the outside inwards, of society towards its members, supplying them with the materials which they themselves build into character. Just in so far as one can comprehend that he could not possibly have been himself but for others, is he able to perceive

¹ The Moral Ideal,⁹ Julia Wedgwood, p. 373.

the absolute obligation under which he rests. Only thus will he truly moralise himself, and so endeavour to repay the debt by rendering himself back a fitting part of a whole whose total perfection is also his. Thus, although personality is the beginning, middle, and end of moral life, it cannot find the food convenient for it save in the rationally moral medium of society.

“The self-poised God may dwell alone
In inward glorying ;
But raptest angel waiteth for
His brother’s voice to sing.
And a lonely creature of sinful nature—
It is an awful thing.”

Now, if there be any truth in such a view of the moral life, certain conclusions wholly inimical to pessimism immediately emerge. Not indeed that the ethical consciousness makes demands, in the Kantian sense, but rather that some palpable truths lie embedded in it. These appear both on the individual and universal sides ; neither, in fact, is separable from the other. So far as the individual is concerned, life has an absolute value of its own. Every organic being in the world exists to achieve its own peculiar perfection. The ever-present cause of the seed is the full ear—this is its idea, the reason why it is here at all. The pains and contradictions to which every human being must submit, as finite, are not grievous only. The great majority of them form obstacles to progress, and as such must be overcome. The effort to subdue them is itself good, for it calls forth latent capacities, and so subserves the growth of individuality. The question is not so much one of happiness or unhappiness, as

of the kind of life which is best suited to secure the full stature of human perfection. And, if all reaching forth towards a higher ideal be good, then opposition, pain, and suffering—nay, even death itself—may become instruments for the revelation of a character which humiliation can only exalt. Not that any one is actually able to stand in place of another. Each has his own peculiar work to do for the general wellbeing. But, in the act of laying down his life, any one may evince a spirit, or display a moral excellence, the perfection of which is attested by the presence of the power to do or die. Further, as each has its own special place to fill, it follows that, in the aggregate, a common end, conceived as perfection of the entire organism, is desiderated. And this end, like the varied perfections of the individuals who labour towards it, is also of absolute value. The whole process of development would be meaningless, it would not conform to the conditions of its own being, were it a mere *progressus*. The very idea of it involves a purpose, which is as essential as the progress itself; nay, is it not even more indispensable? For it was immanently present with the process from the beginning, is the efficient cause of the present advance, and, in its full manifestation, will be the consummation of all. No doubt, “in order to satisfy the idea which sets us upon the search for development, we should be able to connect all particular processes of development with each other, the lower as subservient to the higher, and to view the world, including human history, as a whole throughout which there is a concerted fulfilment of capabilities. This we cannot do; but neither our inability to do it, nor the appearance of positive inconsis-

ency between much that we observe and any scheme of universal development, can weaken the authority of the idea, which does not rest on the evidence of observation, but expresses an inward demand for the recognition of a unity in the world answering to the unity of ourselves—a demand involved in the self-consciousness which alone enables us to observe facts as such.”¹

We have, therefore, as implications of the moral consciousness, the truths, that all morality relates to a rational personality; that persons aid one another in mutual self-bettering; and that humanity as a whole develops, because it reaches forth to some higher state pertaining to self-consciousness, for the realisation of which all moral effort is leagued. Apart from a personal self-conscious intelligence, morality is without meaning. Life is moulded into a moral unity by an ethical principle which is present at the outset, is the prime motive-force throughout, and constitutes the *terminus ad quem*. This principle is known to us as individuality, character, personal *differentia*,—call it what you please. The self-conscious world, in its totality, is pervaded by a similar principle. For purpose is without essence save as flowing from consciousness. An end is implied which is somehow presented, a process is present which is somehow carried on. Unless this “somehow” be referable to a being who can differentiate means from end, and fit the one to the other, evolutionary progress might as well be non-existent. There is no purpose without reason, and there can be no unconscious assignment of reason. And an absolute self-conscious being, who is God, is not merely a querulous demand of the moral conscious-

¹ Prolegomena to Ethics, T. H. Green, p. 196.

ness, but is its necessary implication. If morality exist, in the manner already contended, then so does God. The being of the one can as unquestionably be proved as that of the other cannot. But to prove God by any method is like proving the sun by light. He alone is sufficient to prove himself. He is doing so continually in the life of man; and every good deed, every kind word, is additional testimony that one day the proof will be extended in a fuller revelation. The idea of a personal God is embedded in any evolution theory of ethics. For such a theory involves the conception that "life is not for itself but for an ethical purpose which is to be realised by life and in life." The value of living depends on an active interest in this purpose. The purpose itself is rendered possible, made obligatory, and finally guaranteed by a self-conscious Personality, through, in, and for whom it exists. On no other basis can an *ethical* theory of development be built.

The Unconscious of Hartmann is not only an ethical absurdity as sketched, it is also a rational impossibility. Starting from it, he necessarily evades the whole point of ethical inquiry. For the question is, not into what place in the world does morality fit, but what is morality. To refer it to the Unconscious is to refer it to nothing. Nay, it is to foreclose the only method whereby Hartmann himself could explain the teleology of which he makes so much. To say that it comes from nothing and goes through misery back to nothing, is to suppress the fact, tacitly assumed, of its absolute value, which, after all, is just what a moral philosopher has to explain fully. Pessimism, as an ethical system, very properly tries to account for the ideal or goal

towards which man's life ever tends. But to show, no matter with what apparatus of proof, that the expected resolution of contradiction or healing of pain lies in the total annihilation of personality, is neither to account for the fact that mind ever sets an ideal before it, nor to alter the circumstance that the moral world ever circles round such an ideal.

It seems, then, that any moral theory which recognises the principle of development—and, for the sake of argument, we have sketched such a theory—must be optimistic. It primarily has relation to an end, to a progress towards that end, and to an immanent cause fulfilling itself in these. Nor does Hartmann fail to see this. The peculiarity of his position is, that he seeks to gain all the optimistic advantages of evolution, and at the same time to fit them into a pessimistic ethical scheme. In order to do this he has, of course, to rid himself of the optimism implied in evolution. This he accomplishes by including "ethical optimism" in a so-called wider plan. Seeing that an immanent cause is traceable in the universe, it follows that the best *pessimistic* life is sought by the moral man. So far so good. But the assumption of Pessimism is that deficiency and suffering are identical. He who strives to attain an ideal recognises his imperfection by comparison with it, and hence the advance in self-improvement. On the contrary, he who experiences suffering simply tries to get away from it. Here lies the rift in Hartmann's argument. Defect and suffering are not necessarily identical. The one implies a positive, the other a negative, future. Consequently, on the pessimistic theory, moralisation, even taken as a whole, is not an all-inclusive process. It is only a means to something outside of it-

self. The end for which it is presumed to work is nothingness. But, according to the principle of development adopted by Hartmann, morality can be explained only by reference to itself. It already includes the end for which it exists. So that, in ridding himself of the indisputable optimism of ethics, Hartmann practically eliminates morality altogether. At all events, the question which he professes to answer does not concern the nature of morality. It has relation rather to a preconceived assumption, and to the deductions to be drawn therefrom. If life be more painful than pleasurable, is it better to live or to die? Hartmann abolishes the optimism of ethics by conveniently altering the scope of his inquiry. He replies, It is better to die; and, with this in mind, tries to show how morality may be subordinated to the desired end.

All this, in its turn, implies that human life *can* be appraised in terms of pleasure and pain. If some one will tell me how my pleasure in drinking a glass of good port is to be balanced against the pain of my neighbour, who has just been bereft of a dearly loved mother, then there may be some reason for considering the pessimist assumption. Till then it may be prudently concluded, both that the assumption is valueless, and that pessimism can never be answered from the standpoint of sensationalism. The cumulative action of morality, having for chiefest illustration the influence of Jesus, is a standing fact which neither Pessimism nor Eudæmonism can compass. The real sacrifice of the whole man to what heart and head recognise as the good character can neither be surmounted by Pessimism nor grounded on Hedonism. Far rather, personal devotion to the perfecting of a society, which

includes self, transcends the painful half-truth of Pessimism and the derogatory untruth of Sensationalism. For, the destruction of sin is to be accomplished neither by the cessation of pain nor by the positive satisfaction of sense, but by that active purifying of heart which, be theories what they may, constitutes man's single means of communion with God.

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